

Winter 1999

Composing compassion: Developing care communities via engagements in the visual arts

Cynthia Worthen Vascak
University of New Hampshire, Durham

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**COMPOSING COMPASSION:
DEVELOPING CARE COMMUNITIES VIA ENGAGEMENTS IN THE VISUAL ARTS**

BY

CYNTHIA WORTHEN VASCAK

Baccalaureate Degree Pan American University 1986

Master of Fine Arts Boston University School for the Arts 1988

DISSERTATION

Volume I

Chapters I - VI

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

December, 1999

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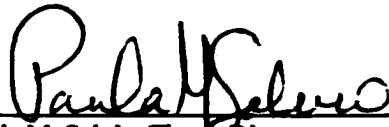
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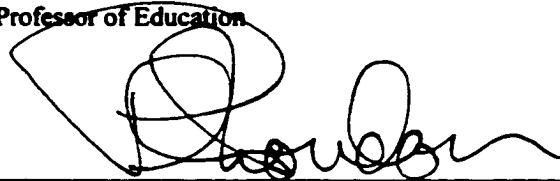
Paula M. Salvio, Thesis Director
Associate Professor of Education



Charles H. Ashley
Associate Professor of Education Emeritus



Ann Diller
Professor of Education



Peter London
Chancellor's Professor and Chair of Art Education
University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth



William Wansart
Associate Professor of Education

October, 7, 1999
Date

DEDICATION

**This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Patricia and John Worthen, who have always believed in me, and to my husband, Vladimir Vascak, who has been a constant source of support, renewal, and love throughout this journey.
Thank you.**

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible without the teaching collaboration and shared envisionment of Wendy Oellers, my teaching soul mate, and the extraordinary children who became our compassionate community.

I give special thanks to Principal Michael Tocci of Gilford Elementary School for having the vision to support my scholarship and providing me with the opportunity to become part of the Gilford Elementary School Community.

I especially thank Dr. Paula Salvio for being a constant wellspring of inspiration, critical care, confirmation, and guidance throughout my entire doctoral journey and beyond.

I thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Charles Ashley, Dr. Ann Diller, Dr. Peter London, Dr. Paula Salvio, and Dr. William Wansart for their insight, advice, care, and spirit.

I thank Dr. Judith Burton who was my first mentor in Art Education and Scholarship. She planted the seeds of belief and envisionment within me and first encouraged me to pursue my doctorate.

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ABSTRACT

COMPOSING COMPASSION:

DEVELOPING CARE COMMUNITIES VIA ENGAGEMENTS IN THE VISUAL ARTS

by

Cynthia Worthen Vascak

University of New Hampshire, December, 1999

Concerns for the development of caring communities in our schools are being increasingly expressed by parents, educators, researchers, and school administrators. Accompanying this expression of concern is the growing acknowledgement that such communities are essential to the well-being of schools and children. If we seek the actualized development of such communities we must also attend to questions of means. I ask, if care communities are considered as essential components of our schools, then how can we develop such communities? I examine the arts and particularly the visual arts and children's engaged art-making as sources for being able to offer educators a sensitive means of developing these communities in school settings. Essential to this examination is the development of a conceptual framework for understanding community, the aesthetic experience, and the art-making experience in relation to empathy, engagement, and the learning process. I present a philosophical discussion that develops a palette for composing multilayered and multifaceted tapestries of care communities using engaged art experiences as fundamental threads. I also present a gallery of images describing the actual development of a compassionate community in a first grade classroom in Gilford, N.H. The pedagogical dimensions of this creative journey are addressed as concerns for curriculum, instructional methodology, time management, assessment, spatial environments, and communication are shared. Above all, this paper presents a contextualized and auto/biographical approach to the study of the relationship between engaged art-making and community that invites the reader's participation and future exploration.

INTRODUCTION: THESIS STATEMENT

I am an artist and an educator. I have always been concerned with the development of empathy and caring relations between my students: what evokes these kinds of feelings and relationships? How can these qualities of empathy and care be cultivated and nurtured? I have also been concerned for all the individuals I have met and continue to meet who say, “I can’t,” about themselves and especially about themselves as being creative and artistic individuals. My experiences as a teacher with my many students from the ages of four to seventy who came to me saying, “I can’t,” and left me believing, “I can,” coupled with our development of a caring learning community and my broader concerns for a more peaceful world led me to this scholarship. I have sought to weave together my studies from feminist ethics, critical pedagogy, and learner-centered art education.

I began to formulate a vision connecting engaged visual art-making and care with the development of a compassionate community in the classroom. If we seriously seek to develop care communities in our schools, we must begin to address diverse possibilities of means. I believed that arts engagements and specifically visual arts engagements (due to my particular expertise) could provide a very powerful yet highly sensitive means of so doing. My vision turned to a classroom for young children, focusing on first graders who are at the beginning of their formal school journey. This vision brought the visual arts into a central position in the learning process as part of the children’s everyday learning and meaning-making. This vision brought together an ethics of care, critical pedagogy, and visual arts engagements. My overriding question became the following: If we seriously seek to develop care communities in our schools, can visual arts engagements help us compose such communities?

I have sought to pursue this question within a philosophical mode of inquiry and to bring my scholarship into an actual classroom in order to traverse the bridge between theory and practice and to provide an autobiographical narrative that brings together my conceptual framework and the story of composing a compassionate community with a particular first-grade class. My goal has not been to prove a point or to provide a specifically replicable formula for developing compassionate communities. I ask instead for the beginning of an interactive dialogue and the consideration of possibilities.

The conceptual framework presented in this thesis is comprised of three core components: the compassionate community, the language of visual art, and engagement. The foundation of the compassionate community is the valuing and nurturing of care. Care, as articulated in the works of Jane Roland Martin and Nel Noddings, is explicated as the most essential and primary goal of education. The ethical foundation of care and relational values is the rich soil from which we begin to cultivate compassionate community. This is a community where we seek and confirm the presence of I and Thou. Care necessitates and emanates from this being in relationship where the inner self of the care giver is fully present and attentive to the well being of the cared-for—to another. So, too, the inner self of the care receiver is addressed and confirmed and brought into relationship— is enabled to be present. Within this community, all individuals are enabled to celebrate their uniquenesses and their diversities while remaining in relationship with one another.

Such care and attention to our inner self and the inner selves of others lead to the cultivation of awareness and empathy. I use the teachings of Thich Nhat Hahn, Noddings, Bahktin, and Lowenfeld to develop an understanding of empathy as highly sensitized perception, becoming fully present, and imaginatively projecting one's inner self into the presence of another yet also receiving that presence into one's self: an act of caring interlocation and self-enhancement. Such awareness of another as being separate yet in relation maintains our sense of interconnectedness while respecting our differences and diversity of situatedness.

Visual art, within this framework, needs to be understood as a universal symbolic language that bridges traditional boundaries between cultures, discourse, and the ways in which we are situated in time and place. The making and creating of visual art, as emphasized in the works of Helen Dissanayake, is an inherent universal trait of the human species; an innate proclivity and capability of all human beings. Meanings can be made and shared through the creation of visual language symbols. This process of meaning-making and creating requires great attention, care, and engagement from the maker. This process involves imaginative empathetic projection and reception, the finding of relationships and connections, and the development of a heightened state of awareness. Such a process intrinsically involves our being present. And this presentness connects our inner selves to our world and to one another, helping us to make meaning, gain insight, and develop our understandings.

Engagement in the context of my scholarship evolves primarily from my direct experiences as an art educator and my studies of the works of Maxine Greene, Thich Nhat Hahn, and Peter London. Engagement describes our human capacity to develop our relational awareness, our capabilities of sensitized perception, and our capabilities of empathy to a level of insight, heightened consciousness, and, ideally, inner harmony. Engagement can open our being to our fullest capacities of perception, understanding, and envisionment. Engaged experiencing is a particular way of perceiving and of being in the world. Engagement is a state of sustained attending: the giving of one's complete attention. Such sustained attending can inspire empathetic responding and a heightening of awareness. When we give our sustained attention with empathy, any experience can become transformed into an encounter of engagement and of I and Thou relationship.

Thus, I emphasize the conjunction of meaningful art-making, care, and engagement. Meaningful art-making and engagement are part of one another. Perceptions, feelings, ideas, and imaginings can be brought forth and can come together during the act or process of engaged art-making. Let us consider engaged art-making as an invitation for I-Thou relationships. How marvelous the range of interpretive insights and meanings made possible through engaged art-making and beholding. We can initiate a dialogue using the language of the visual arts that will embrace our inner selves and offer opportunities to nurture empathy, relationships, and meaning-making. We can apprehend our own reality and the realities of others. Thus, we can nurture the development of mutual understandings, an appreciation of differences, and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual.

This is the core of the conceptual framework I brought to the first-grade class. Throughout this thesis, I have woven many narrative vignettes from this first-grade class and our journey together in becoming a compassionate community and in becoming engaged artists. I present the transformation of the classroom into a dynamic creative studio and gallery and center of care while analyzing the constellation of factors that influenced this transformation. Thus we encounter the practice of compassionate community and engaged art-making within these pages. As we examine and discuss this transformation, so, too, we must reflect upon another constellation that emerges: impact, impact upon the children, the teacher, the community, and the consideration of future teacher training and professional development

My ultimate conclusion is, yes, daily visual arts engagements can facilitate the development of compassionate community. When children are engaged in the process of meaningful engaged art-making, their desires, interests, longings, fears—the complexity of their inner feelings and their inner selves entered into relationship with their art expressions, with the subject/s of their attention, and with each other. In essence, they were practicing a form of mindfulness and being present which could be considered as a form of mediation in action. Everyday they practiced and engaged in acts of sensitized attending, empathy, engagement, and care. Such engagement and presence of I and Thou relationships encountered, modeled, practiced, and confirmed everyday did cultivate the children's self-awareness and capabilities of care. Here is the essence of our compassionate community. I invite you to enter into our community, to enter into our story, and to enrich this discourse with your own story. Let us consider the possibilities of becoming...

CHAPTER I

SETTING AND LOCATION

Setting: Self Location

To reveal myself in my work means to bring the self, the psyche, soul, mind, spirit—that peculiarly structured inner world that makes each of us who we are—directly to my work. This means that when I go into a school...I expect to form relationships, expecting both to influence others, and to be influenced and changed myself. If I participate in authentic relationships, how could this be otherwise. (Rogers from Eds. Woyshner and Gelfond 1998, p. 197).

I was a quiet child. Perhaps silent would be more sensitive from my educator's point of view. I was shy and fearful of speaking out my feelings and thoughts, always at the edge of knowing I would be humiliated and always at the margins throughout school. I felt as if I never quite fit in, to the neighborhood without children my own age, or in my school; I learned too fast, I was too tall, I was horrible at sports, I liked to read. And then, when we moved, I was mistracked during middle school and high school. Worse not better. So I drew pictures. I read voraciously. I studied classical guitar. These were my most real worlds. I developed an inner world of images, melodies, and words and stories. At the time, I did not know how this world would provide me with the strength and the means of overcoming my silence, would enable me to shout out my joys, name my wounds, whisper my hopes, and call out my love.

My hope now is to prevent that silencing, marginalizing, and wounding and to offer all children the possibilities of envisionment and to be able to resonate with confidence, not only in the expression of their ideas, feelings, wonderings, and imaginings, but also in the sharing of these expressions within a deeply caring and compassionate community in school and in the broader communities of neighborhood and world: sharing without fear of humiliation, hurt, being wrong, feeling stupid, not understanding the answer, being ashamed, being left out, being alone, and being different, so that every child is cherished and valued for the very qualities of their uniqueness.

As a young adult I studied art and literature. I lived in Montreal, Quebec, for ten years in the 1970s, then southern Texas for five years—both areas of intensified sociopolitical activism and

emancipatory inquiry responding to a history of cultural and racial oppression . I had left university to be married and followed the traditional path of working to put him through school. I worked in many nonprofessional positions gaining rich life experiences and understandings regarding covert class structures and being able to view the world through a very different frame of consciousness than that of the white, Anglo-Saxon, upper middle class Protestant milieu in which I had been raised. As I learned two new languages and cultural customs I came to consider how the languages with which we speak and the art forms that not only are valued but also surround us give us unique cultural lenses with which to perceive, interpret, and understand our world, in addition to our own individual situatedness. I continued my studies independently, I continued drawing, and I began to take courses one by one, eventually gaining the confidence to return to university accompanied by the burning desire to teach and change the world. So much to learn. So naive! Now, not so naive but still so much to learn!

I became a teacher of art. My innermost self knew that I needed the constant nourishment and fulfillment from making art—I had to continue to grow both as a visual artist and as a teacher. I knew that literature would always be a part of my life—major sources of inspiration—but reading and responding to in written form was not, for me, the making of art: my art form was and is visual. Throughout my subsequent teaching and graduate studies (in Boston, then the Massachusetts south shore, and now New Hampshire), I held a constant belief in the transformative power of image-making and the fundamentalness of visual images as a core human language. I further came to believe in the creative capabilities of all human beings and that there is no individual who is “not artistic” or who “cannot draw” in spite of their personal disbelief.

However, I frequently observed the influence and power of pedagogical practice and curricular design either to nurture the individual’s artistic growth and development or to diminish and even crush these innate capabilities in addition to either nurturing the individual’s sense of self and confidence as a learner or again diminishing this growth and development. As an educator, I moved from public school to university to become an instructor of studio art and art education—a direction which included working with elementary education majors and introducing them to the visual arts and the possibilities of integrating the visual arts into their future curricula and instructional practice. Thus I work with artists and future

teachers—classroom teachers and art teachers.

I began my university teaching with a focus on art education as my primary interest and through my work with my elementary education students (undergraduate and graduate) I realized the extent of their impact on children's artistic growth and development and their power either to support learning in art and the arts or to subvert such learning—without intention and even unknowingly—which, within the context of my direct observations and discussions (with students and teachers) seemed to be due to a comprehensive misunderstanding and even fear of arts in terms of actual making and practice, and due to an enculturated predominant valuing of highly representational (photorealistic) images, and the assumption that growth in the visual arts is due to “talent” rather than motivation, hard work, practice, and study. My work began to thrust towards two questions. How to deconstruct these misunderstandings and together build a new creative consciousness? How to promote all pervasive arts opportunities for children throughout their schooling and to begin blurring the boundaries between art classes, other classes, school, and world? Of course these questions lead to the question of impact—what would happen, on a multitude of levels, if this were possible and if this actually happened?

As I pursued these questions along with my teaching and art-making and doctoral studies, I also returned to a deeper spiritual quest for belonging, for caring, and for a peaceful world. I found inspiration, affirmation, and sources of tremendous personal growth emanating from my studies in critical literacy, emancipatory pedagogy, feminist ethics and pedagogy, learning theory, and aesthetics. My research began to embrace questions concerning the development of community, compassion, and care, which had always been at the core of my actual teaching beliefs and practices. Could art and a care community be connected? My initial insights have been affirmed yet far more finely wrought, elaborated upon, and connected to a community of educators with whom I share a vision, with whom I engage in dialogue, from whom I constantly learn, and with whom I now speak.

As I have listened to my students and observed their experiences, as I re-present their spoken words, written words, images, and actions in text, I present my interpretations and my observations all perceived through the lens of my beliefs and values. Even as I analyze, edit, and compose and try to be as replicably precise as possible, I will always be uniquely situated however many dialogues I enter into with

others and however I try to observe a situation or develop an understanding from multiple perspectives (Bakhtin and Rogers 1993). When making art with children (and all individuals), when sharing our art with one another, we enter into intimate relationships with one another. Rogers (1993) describes this kind of intimacy and relationship as she listens to the stories of girls and women during her research. This relationship expands to the readers of this text. We bring our collective life experiences, insights, and understandings together, which creates a new dialogue of agreement, disagreement, questioning, and exploring.

Site: The Scene

Gilford, N.H., is a moderately sized community of 5,947 people according to the Selectman's Office. The community of Gilford is nestled between Gunstock mountain and Lake Winnepesaukee. Driving into the village center, you can see the General Store, the town library, two Christopher Wren style churches, and a series of very well cared for New England clapboard farmhouses painted a crisp white with evergreen shutters at the windows. Farther down the road are the elementary school and, across the street, the middle/high school. The scene presents an idyllic illustration of a pastoral small town in America evoking memories of Norman Rockwell and the Saturday Evening Post. The windy roads are lined with majestic maples and statuesque blue spruce, gardens are carefully cultivated to evoke a fine balance between the natural and the tended... Split rail fences carefully crumble into old stone walls... And in the distance, the mountains, the forest, and a clear sunlit sky. This is the land so eloquently described by Robert Frost. Perhaps this very village leads to a path not taken. The woods are sown with mending walls and memories.

There is a full range of socioeconomic circumstances among the Gilford community members, although within the past ten years there has been a consistently increasing young and successful professional population drawn to Gilford because of its charm, its natural beauty, its location, and its schools. Gilford Elementary is a K–5th grade school with a population of approximately four hundred students. Upon “graduation” students attend the middle/high school that is located across the street. The student-teacher ratio at Gilford Elementary averages 22 students per class. There are, at the present, two

Kindergarten classes and four classes at each successive grade level, with one of the first-grade classes being a one-two looping class. The Gilford Elementary faculty includes one visual arts educator, one music educator, and one technology coordinator. Specials, which consist of art, music, library, physical education, and computers, meet once a week for fifty minutes. Most of the teachers have taught at Gilford Elementary for over ten years. As one fifth-grade teacher confided to me, teaching at Gilford is a treasured opportunity. The teachers feel that they are supported by the administration, the community as a whole, and the parents.

I first became acquainted with Gilford Elementary six years ago through my Plymouth State College position as a supervisor of student teachers in art education. At that time, Gilford Elementary had not undergone its building expansion and renovations. The building was quite old—although exteriorly a charming vision of the old brick New England schoolhouse topped with the white cupola and spire, and situated on a grassy knoll surrounded by a vista of mountains and maple groves. Within however, the building was crowded, traditionally configured in a central block design typical of schools designed in the 1930s era. At that time, there was no visual art classroom and the art educator had been teaching from an art cart for ten years. The building was transformed with major renovations, reconstruction, and additions during the years of 1992 and 1993. Exteriorly, the historic integrity of the original architecture has been maintained but the interior has been completely redesigned to be filled with light, to facilitate movement throughout the school, between classrooms, within classrooms, and to the world outdoors. Classrooms are further configured to provide for multiple possibilities and variations for the creation of dynamic learning environments. They are open and spacious. Most have one full wall of windows opening to the outdoors and many have their own doors leading outside. Portable dividers are used to separate classrooms yet allow for opening and closing and expanding spatial environments as learning needs arise. All classrooms have a dry area of carpeting and a wet area of linoleum. The K–2 classes also have their own bathrooms. Each classroom has a large glass panel in the hallway wall that most teachers have chosen to use as a display area within and without. Some keep peepholes and others do not. Classrooms are clustered into grade level areas with a special wing for the new art and music classrooms, which are centrally located. The library is also centrally located and is designed to be full of light and space and, of course, books. A dual computer lab has been designed that accommodates 25 students and provides technological support for teachers.

Upon arriving at Gilford Elementary, the visitor must walk around a sculptural installation located directly in front of the entrance. This sculpture is composed of two almost intersecting concrete slabs approximately eight feet high that are formed in the shapes of mountain silhouettes with trees, stars, and moons carved upon their surfaces. These mountain silhouettes are configured to overlap but not to touch, allowing for a stone river to wind between them, which is, in turn, surrounded by soft grass and wild flowers. This sculpture was designed, constructed, and installed by the fourth and fifth graders working with their art teacher and a guest artist-in-residence. After entering the building, the visitor is surrounded by light emanating from a large domed and faceted skylight that has students' mobiles suspended from its interior framework. Across the hall, a permanent ceramic mural glows with rich, warm desert colors (also designed and made by students), plants grow abundantly enjoying the light, and a large oak bench invites conversation. Looking down the hallways, the visitor may also observe an abundance of children's artwork proudly displayed. The first impression is one of warmth, of children's creative energy, and of invitation. It feels good to be here!

As I became more and more involved with the school through my student art educators, I also became part of a collaborative journey initiated by the N.H. State Council for the Arts, the Gilford Elementary art educator at that time, John Haytab, and Principal Mike Tocci. The Council wanted to pursue the possibility of supporting the development of a model Integrated Arts School for New Hampshire, which would be inspired by the Connecticut H.O.T. schools. These Higher Order Thinking and Integrated Arts Schools were (and are) being developed through the initiative of the Connecticut State Council for the Arts and Principal Plato Karafelis of the Wolcott School in Hartford. I was asked to participate along with my colleague Dr. William Haust from Plymouth State College as art education consultants. Thus, I became one of the members of the Gilford Elementary H.O.T. School team working with their art, music, and gym educators, their librarian, their computer specialist, and Principal Tocci.

This project developed into a five-year plan for Gilford Elementary to become an Integrated Arts—H.O.T. school. I committed myself to ongoing professional development workshops, program evaluation, and participatory involvement with teachers. I began considering Gilford Elementary as the site for my future dissertation research due to the support for the arts, critical and creative thinking, openness

regarding the consideration of alternative assessments, openness to change, the enthusiasm of the teachers, and my growing involvement. I would not be a stranger entering a field site when my research actually began—I would already, hopefully, have become a familiar and trusted member within the community and would not begin my research as an outsider.

Since that time, due to my participation in professional development workshops, and my voluntary work on a pilot Integrative Arts project with two fourth-grade classes (which brought me to Gilford Elementary every Friday afternoon and many Wednesdays for six months), I gained respect as a teacher and a collaborative colleague. These experiences further sensitized me to the many roles I have to play, the many responses and attitudes of others towards me, and my own subjective/objective responses.

During the time of my weekly involvement, I met the first-grade looping teacher, Wendy Oellers. I eventually ended up following her into her classroom at the end of school one day where we enthusiastically began discussing the co-construction of knowledge, Reggio Emilia, and the recent performance to the whole school, by her first graders, of “Reptile Rock.” The children had rewritten the words to “Rock Around the Clock” incorporating their knowledge of reptiles and poetic language and had collaboratively painted giant reptile letters as props and designed their performance costumes of jeans, black t-shirts, and black sunglasses. Wendy had choreographed dance movements to accompany their singing, which they had also collaboratively revised and learned. Wendy was at the final stages of her M.ED. studies and research through the Antioch Critical Skills in Education Program. Her thesis work focused on the question

How can I create a learning environment that will ensure the success for all of the students in my primary looping classroom...In this project, the author explores the integration and implementation of three educational theories into a classroom model that facilitates feelings of success and academic success among her students. The three models explored are: Charney’s Responsive Classroom, Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, and Antioch’s Education by Design. It is the story of a journey taken by the author and her students during their two years together. It describes how “the importance of community”, “the value of the intelligences”, and “the art of crafting problems”, can all combine to create both quality learning and positive feelings for the students... (Roche 1997, preface).

I knew I had a teaching soul mate! As she further described her commitment to the development of community as her primary concern during the first six weeks of school, her commitment to the integration of the arts, and her sense of inadequacy and lack of knowledge concerning the visual arts, I

knew also that we had to work together and we began discussing this possibility.

The Teacher

To their unspoken words give wings
and honor the question "why?"
Provide the tools and a place of trust
let their imaginations fly.

Open the windows and share the world
delight in the senses unfolding.
Join hands with the knowledge
of the past and today,
in a circle to embrace their tomorrows,

Cherish the children that challenge,
inspire the hopes that have dimmed.
For the faltering ones give courage
and solace to the outcasts within.

Your sojourn together is brief in time
but the truths can be everlasting.
The greatest gifts are the discovery
of one's mind
and a life-long love for learning.

(Oellers June 1993)

Is there ever a "typical" first grade in our contemporary "American" culture? As I considered Gilford Elementary as a research site, I began plaguing myself with concerns for generalizability and wondered if Gilford Elementary was too supportive, too generally affluent, too culturally and racially homogeneous, too...

Yet, I reminded myself, each class of children is also unique unto themselves, as is each situation contextually and culturally unique, as are our shared attributes of humanity and need. I decided to stop asking "What will I be able to generalize?" and ask instead, "What will I be able to learn, what will the children be able to learn, what will their teachers and parents be able to learn?" I believe this to be a far deeper and probing question. I then asked myself why Gilford and why not Plymouth or Holderness? These schools are only 5 minutes away instead of 50...I returned to two concerns: First, I was already a small part of the Gilford Elementary school community and would not have to become initiated into the community and undergo the rites of passage for entrance and acceptance. Second, the arts were valued but were they deeply understood? I could still walk into Gilford Elementary and be greeted by a hallway filled with two hundred George Washington faces all xeroxed, cut out, and carefully colored in with minor variations of

features—and this activity would have been considered, by most teachers, to be an art activity! I also had the support of the principal, and I had a teaching soul mate to work with, collaborate with, and reflect with... and then, the children. Gilford may be a fairly affluent community among New Hampshire villages, but this affluence does not eliminate broken homes, abusive families, drug and alcohol problems in the home, poverty, hunger for love, societal and media violence, learning challenges, behavioral challenges, and the need for care.

So, this possibility became a reality. Wendy and I share a vision of possibility and hope for all children and have mutually committed ourselves to this vision. So, I formally became a teacher-researcher in her, now our, class community. Wendy, I, and all the children shared a journey of learning and discovery together and together we wove the tapestry of our stories. The journey began the second week of September 1998. I was able to become a direct participant in the class community every Monday and Wednesday morning from 8:20 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. and Friday for the full day from 8:20 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. from this first month of September through the second week of January 1999. After that time, I withdrew so that Wendy could initiate and implement all art activities individually without my presence. I was able to visit the children every other Friday either for the full day or for a half day from mid-January through June (excepting visits that were cancelled due to storms or Wendy's absence) and returned to the classroom on a daily basis for final interviews, closure, and the sharing of community during the last weeks of school from June 8th through June 18th of 1999.

I am still working with Wendy and an additional three classroom teachers from grades one through three who have become the first members of an Integrated Instructional Team. Wendy and I designed an Integrated Instructional model upon the request of Principal Tocci who was a constant visitor and observer of our community. The model (see appendix) developed out of our collaborative teaching, research, and dialogue during the spring of 1998 and that was accepted by the school board as a pilot program for designing, implementing, and evaluating integrated arts and interdisciplinary curriculum in May 1998. As I now write, during the spring of 1999, the impact of the model has been so positive in so many ways (see chapters seven and eight and appendix) that three additional members will be joining the

team for next year. This growth represents the continued development and refinement of our vision and the ongoing journey of our learning together.

CHAPTER II

SIGNIFICANCE

Our children are growing up in an ever increasingly diverse, intolerant, alienating, dehumanizing, and violent world (Noddings 1992, Martin 1992, and hooks and West 1991). Further exacerbating these conditions, five million immigrants have arrived in the United States between 1983 and 1990 during a time of economic stagnation and cut backs in entry level employment. The face of our population has become enriched with a diversity of language, cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and race. Instead of embracing this diversity, this wave of immigration has been accompanied by a rising anger, hostility, and resurfacing of oppressive biases and racism (Aronowitz and Giroux 1993). As educators, we are facing increasingly diverse populations of students, compositions of families, homes, and learning needs. School has become more disconnected from our children's lived world. As a result, learning has become more disconnected from the existential dilemmas we face in life and from a quest for wisdom, spirituality, fulfillment, envisionment, and meaning (hooks and West 1992 and Lowenfeld 1958, 68). West poignantly describes our society as suffering from an impoverishment of the spirit and an all pervasive cultural emphasis of pragmatism and consumerism rather than philosophy, aesthetics, or spirituality. Our contemporary dilemma is one of separation, from Self, Nature, Community, and Love. Our educational goals need to be reconsidered relative to this crisis in social meaning, community consciousness, existential alienation, and spiritual vacuity. We could then describe the essence of education as helping us to see, hear, and experience the world more clearly, more completely, and with more understanding: to provide us with the skills of critical reading, thinking, seeing, hearing, and writing, which enable us to understand—and to develop our imaginations and creativity, which enable us not only to understand but also to envision possibilities, to make, to create, and to recreate our world (Lowenfeld 1958, hooks and West 1991, Grumet 1993, and Greene 1995).

The essential dimension of education becomes meaning and care. The ultimate goal of education becomes liberation for all from oppression, hunger, disease, bigotry, war, greed, ignorance, alienation, self-doubt...and all other barriers to a life of joy, spiritual fulfillment, and meaning for every single person.

We are most interested—indeed all of us—in living in a better world and, first of all, in being happy in the deepest sense and not in the superficial meaning which we attach to it in an era of materialistic gains... material goods will never replace the inner equilibrium we are seeking throughout our lives. If we can do something, we have to do it in the formative stages of childhood because during this times the foundation is laid for developing sensitivity to our environment and ourselves; and if we do not do it in childhood, it is very difficult to conquer later on—if not impossible (Lowenfeld 1958, p. 3).

We need to be able to teach for shared living and responsibility. Education must integrate thought and action, expression and investigation, reason and emotion, life and spirit, care and responsibility, self and community, compassion, relationship, and vision (Martin 1992, Noddings 1992, and hooks and West 1991). Thus, we can develop caring communities of support and of inquiry (Diller 1993).

The formation of the whole person was Merton's central educational concern. In his view, education is essentially an inner process of self-discovery that cuts through the social and ideological falsehoods of the modern world. Modern people are conditioned to develop a false self—an atomistic person primarily concerned with material possessions and social status. Education is too often an active agent of this process, a violation of the true self—which Merton considered to be the innermost center or divine spark within each person. Education, in Merton's terms, ought to be a dialogue, a loving human encounter that strengthens man against the noise, the violence, the slogans, and the half-truths of our materialistic society. (Merton quoted by Thomas del Prete. Book Review. Thomas Merton and the Education of the Whole Person, *Great Ideas in Education*, #8. Spring 1996).

We need to build as many bridges as possible between the actual cultural backgrounds of our students, their rich personal experiences and preexisting knowledge, their compelling interests, concerns, and needs (Dewey 1938). Subsequently, we can begin to explore the vital connections between one another's lives within and beyond school walls, creating a forum for the encouragement of inquiry, thinking, creating, communicating, sharing, caring, participating, reflecting upon, and transforming our lives within the spirit of compassion (hooks and West 1991, Noddings 1992, Martin 1992, London 1994, Giroux 1993, and Thich Nhat Hahn 1987). I believe that the arts and, in this case, visual arts engagements are such bridges and that they provide us with the means of transforming our lives, our communities, and our ever emerging culture. Visual arts engagements can nurture and confront our moral sensibilities and enable us to engage deeply in reflective, personal, interpersonal, and cross cultural conversations (Greene 1995, Paley 1995, and Cahan and Kokur 1996). These conversations ultimately not only develop our

personal cultural agency but also enable us to participate fully in the making, sharing, and celebrating of each others' cultures. We then generate a polyphonies cycle of empathy, understanding, compassion, and envisionment.

Knowledge, Courage, and Love—things that everyone can relate to. It doesn't just take good technique or a great sculpting hand to be an artist in our society today. It takes a great deal of love for others and most of all—Compassion.
(Cahan and Kokur 1996, p. 45).

According to Burton (1996), there are comparatively few studies that substantially address a vision of learning and development in and through the visual arts, that are clearly able to distinguish the unique characteristics of artistic and aesthetic learning, without the visual arts playing a subsidiary role to learning in other domains. I wish to develop a set of philosophical principles that value visual art as an expressive language of communication and that enable students and teachers to engage at a deeply meaningful and reflective level with this symbolic language. These principles will serve as guidelines for cultivating each student's perceptual sensitivities and using the visual arts as an occasion to reflect upon and communicate deeply meaningful feelings, responses, and ideas with one another. Visual art, therefore, is not a subsidiary language or domain of knowledge used for the purposes of developing skills in verbal and written language, nor simply a means of literacy rehearsal. Visual art is not an integrative add-on nor the surface decoration of walls, hallways, and written assignments. Visual art is a unique symbolic language with which we reflect upon, make sense of, order, integrate, ponder, envision, and communicate our growing understandings, awarenesses, experiences, and engagements with our self, with others, and with our world. Visual art becomes a dynamic language bridge as described by Madeleine Grumet.

Good teaching at every level requires the construction of a new language in the middle, that bridges our many ways of speaking about the world. With this middle language we find a medium where we can address the world we left at home as well as the public world that schooling always points to. We create what Winnicott (1971) calls transitional space, a space for exploration and improvisation on the relations that have framed our identities and purposes (Grumet 1993, p.208).

I believe that contemporary studies concerned with Feminist Pedagogy / Ethics and Critical Literacy have not addressed the role of the visual arts in the development of relational communities, care, engagement, and agency. Yes, The Arts are addressed, but with closer scrutiny, The Arts refers to drama

and theater, movement and dance, creative writing and poetry, video and film, music, but not the visual arts. As an example, Jane Roland Martin (1992), in her seminal work, School Home, eloquently promotes theater arts and journalism as pivotal curriculum web builders. She describes their innate connectiveness and integrativeness to students' personal experiences, to heart and hand as well as mind and reason, to participation, to collaboration, and to the whole range of content areas. She further describes theater and journalism as being able to inspire, illuminate, and motivate due to their connections to personal meaning, common purpose, and to the whole student. Each student can be successful and contribute. However, Martin completely neglects the visual arts, making the all too common assumption that the creating of Visual Art is an act of isolation and that the beholding of visual art can only be within the context of isolation.

Additional examples can be found in the writings of Grumet, Salvio, and Greene. Grumet (1988), in her work, Bitter Milk, uses the vocabulary of the visual arts to describe a rich metaphor of the teacher as artist. She extends this metaphor to include the studio—gallery spaces needed by teachers in order to have “windows of time and space within the school day” (Grumet 1988, p.91) for the reflective, reflexive, and creative dimensions of their art.

There is a dialectic of withdrawal and extension, isolation and community, assertion and submission to aesthetic practice that requires both the studio where the artist harvests silence and the gallery where she serves the fruit of her inquiry to others. (Grumet 1988, p. 94).

Again, I perceive the conception of the visual artist creating in a space withdrawn from contact with others and filled with silence. My own experiences as an artist, with my many friends and colleagues who are artists, and with my student artists gives me a different understanding of studio spaces: some are private and secluded while others are shared and highly social in the sense of being a common space of communication and synchronic creating. Both are continually traversed. Grumet (1988) also invites us, as teachers, to play with artistic materials, to mix paints upon a canvas, to sense the light playing upon a surface...but these terms are the roots of her metaphor, not actual calls to bring paints and brushes and canvases into the classroom. Instead, these materials remain nested in the symbol system of words. Word texts and body texts are her canvases in the classroom and theater is used to enact their possibilities and

provide the bridge between public and private readings. Where are painted canvases? Where are the image texts and the reading and writing of image texts? The image also enables us “to open ourselves, to transcend ourselves, to find what is hidden in us all” (Jerzy Grotowski quoted by Grumet 1988, p. 148). Visual art is a form of text, beholding is a form of reading, and making a form of writing. Visual imaging is a resymbolization of meaning, is a way of thinking that synthesizes feeling, and was our first form of text. Our first sacred texts were images.

Salvio (1995), also address the reading and the writing of word texts. She invites us to Imagine for a moment that the book is a dwelling place. Perhaps a hut, a dovecote, or monastery. As readers we move through this dwelling place, sometimes stumbling, lingering, or moving with great speed... How does the reader experience this literary space? Does it make her feel dispossessed or exiled? Can she embrace it or does she feel completely lost? The emotions readers experience can be, in the words of Elizabeth Spelman, “highly revelatory of whom and what we don’t care about.” Our emotions can provide “important clues to the ways in which we take ourselves to be implicated in the lives of others and they in turn ours.” (Spelman 1991, p.220; Salvio 1995, p. 9).

Salvio asks us to consider not only the temporal dimension but also the spatial dimension of the reader’s experience. She asks us to pay close attention as we walk through the sensory paths of the narrative woods and gardens, and reminds us of how we daydream between the lines of text. These between the lines wanderings lead us to our personal stories, imaginings, and emotions. So, too, do we participate in the reading of visual art forms or texts. We travel similar paths and discover mutual connections, narratives, memories, emotions, body, and self. Salvio has adopted textual interpretive devices such as social geste, montage, tableaux, and reading against the text, from the dramaturgy of Bertold Brecht, in order to engage her students in deeply reflexive analysis of textual reading and personal writing. She creates an interrelational theatrical space with her students in which they can manifest their understandings through physical performance using the

language of gesture, gait, and breath... The reasonable reader, I believe, is a pragmatic reader. The pragmatic reader is not only skillful at making inferences and predictions within the text, but she also tests the validity of her insights in the world of social action. Thus, the pragmatic reader inhabits and takes action on a social landscape. She is a dweller and an actor... The spaces in which we read are political, emotional, and philosophical diagrams that guide the reader in her analysis of Self in the social world. (Salvio 1995, p. 14).

I will interject that montage, tableaux, bricolage, and synchronic juxtapositioning are not only dramatic devices but stylistic devices used by visual artists. Visual artists also create narrative woods and gardens and spaces: virtual spaces and actual environmental spaces that the artist and the beholder must physically move through to experience. Both synthesize sensory, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual understandings and respondings to experience, and both build upon a sensory-emotional foundation. These visual spaces, just as Salvio's theatrical-performance spaces and performances, open multiple layers of understanding and consciousness that enable the participants to understand better themselves and their relational world. But where are they in our classrooms and in our research?

Greene's extensive writings across the fields of philosophy, aesthetics, and critical pedagogy resound with her call to cast the cotton wool out of our eyes, to notice, care, name, feel, and envision. Our minds and hearts should be never resting, our voices never stilled, and our consciousness never shackled. The possibility of the world splitting open when a repressed truth is revealed is always within us—if we choose to speak—or if we can find the voice with which to speak. Poets and artists, reminds Greene, call to us and open the spaces of our awareness.

They create spaces these poets, between themselves and what envelopes and surrounds. Where there are the spaces like that, desire arises, along with hope and expectation. We may sense that something is lacking that must be surpassed or repaired. Often, therefore, poems address our freedom; they call on us to move beyond where we are, to break with submergence, to transform... To move beyond ourselves... How can we awaken others to possibility and the need for action in the name of possibility? How can we communicate the importance of opening spaces in the imagination where persons can reach beyond where they are?
(Greene 1996, p. 16)

Greene also calls us to the arts and artists demanding our close attention and engagement in order to open such spaces in our hearts, our minds, and our spirit. Aesthetic engagement is a source of inspiration, a mode of meditation, an encounter of awakening, and a vehicle of transformation. She focuses on the impact of art forms upon the engaged beholder and eloquently weaves profound examples and encounters into her discourse. Recently, while reading her book Releasing the Imagination (Greene 1995), she begins to consider the possibilities of creating art forms in the classroom and using a range of symbol systems with which to construct meaning.

I would like to think of teachers moving the young into their own interpretations of their lives and their lived worlds, opening wider and wider perspectives as they do so. I would like to see teachers ardent in their efforts to make the range of symbol systems available to the young for the ordering of experience, even as they maintain regard for their vernaculars. I would like to see teachers tapping into the spectrum of intelligences, encouraging multiple readings of written texts and readings of the world... We may be able to empower people to rediscover their own memories and articulate them in the presence of others, whose space they can share. Such a project demands the capacity to unveil and disclose. It demands the exercise of imagination, enlivened by works of art, by situations of speaking and making (Greene 1996, p. 29).

Visual art does connect to personal meaning, to emotions/feelings, ideas, sensory perceptions and responses, reflection, critical and creative thinking, and inspiration. Visual art involves direct participation, communication, and meaning-making: one cannot be a spectator artist or passive artist. Visual art can be highly individual or collaborative but is ultimately always shared within the community through acts of engagement, beholding, creative problem solving, and responding—both individually and with others. Furthermore, visual art provides a universal language of communication and expression that traverses cultural, linguistic, racial, historical, class, and gender differences (Cahan and Kokur 1996). A community is composed that offers the nurturance of understanding, appreciation, and respect for such differences and for the individuality of each student.

Regardless of these potentials, visual art has remained marginalized in our schools. Visual art (and The Arts) are often the first subjects to be attacked and eliminated during times of budgetary crisis. The Arts and visual art commonly represent nonessential educational frills.

The response among art advocates has been to try and protect the small piece of turf that we think we control despite the fact that this piece of turf keeps getting smaller and smaller. Instead of strengthening the role of art, such a defensive response reinforces its marginalized position in schools (Kahan and Cocur 1996, p. xxvii).

I believe that we need to bring visual art out of the “Garrett” and into the mainstream of our educational priorities. This means not only supporting a dynamic art education program but also weaving visual art into the everyday learning lives of our children in their everyday classroom with their classroom teacher. I am in no way advocating the diminishment of art education programs nor am I disputing the absolute need for excellent art educators. I am, however, stating that visual art can grow and flourish beyond the art class and within all classrooms—especially in collaboration with a strong art education program. The possibilities of

such collaborations and extensions still need to be explored. Kahan and Cocur (1996) assert that little attention has been paid to the substantive roles that visual art can play in education.

The National Endowment for the Arts in Education Program, the U. S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement, and arts educators throughout the country (affiliated to the National Art Education Association) developed an Arts Education Research Agenda for the Future that was published in 1994. At this time, the members of the visual arts group formulated a series of compelling research questions for the 1990s, all of which pertain to this thesis proposal.

The following questions were generated: 1) What are the deepest and most profound purposes of education (e. g. knowledge of self, the world, normative issues of good and evil, etc.)? 2) What do the arts in general and visual arts specifically contribute to education? 3) What is the content of visual art education, how does it contribute, and how might it be altered to contribute more fully to the purposes of education? 4) What are the instrumental outcomes of art and art education (e. g. self-esteem, higher order thinking skills, student motivation, prevention of drop-outs, achievement in other subjects, raising of test scores, and future employment? 5) How do and should instrumental outcomes relate to and differ from purposes of art and arts education? And 6) Can purposes and instrumental outcomes be achieved simultaneously? (NAEA Commission on Research in Art Education 1996).

Subsequently, in 1996 the National Art Education Association Commission on Research in Art Education published a research agenda for the 21st century. This report identified nine key areas of needed research: demographics, conceptual issues, curriculum, instruction, instructional settings, student learning, program and instructional evaluation, teacher education, and technologies. Within each area, the commission further generated key questions. Conceptual issues were described as “theoretical, philosophical, and historical issues dealing with the content and practice of visual arts instruction, teaching dynamics, social implications, assessment criteria, etc.” (NAEA Commission on Research in Art Education 1996, p. 87).

More specifically, they ask:

- What definitions of art are being used in art education programs?
- How have past educational practices shaped art education programs?
- What are considered worthwhile aims for visual arts programs?
- What art content is considered appropriate to be taught? To whom?
- What art objects may best be used as examples at various grade levels?
- How might feminist inquiry and post-modern critical theories influence art teaching practices?
- What impact does cultural diversity have on the selection of art content used for study?
- What ethical and moral bases might inform the choice of content included in

art curricula?
(NAEA Commission on Research in Art Education 1996, p. 87)

I present these questions to affirm the need for studies that address art education beyond the exclusive environment of the art education class and that examine these questions through the lenses of feminist ethics and emancipatory pedagogy.

Furthermore, the field of art education has undergone a tremendous upheaval due to the impact of Discipline Based Art Education and the subsidization of DBAE by the Getty Center for the Education in the Arts. Previously, no one educational perspective or system of beliefs concerning art and art education has held precedence over others.

With the Getty Center for the Education in the Arts focusing its considerable resources to the promulgation of one perspective and employing remarkable expertise and sums in marketing this single perspective through means simply unavailable to any other contending view, our profession may well lose the single most important instrument for its intellectual life; open and joined debate amongst equals. Any perspective which sees itself as the sole legitimate, adequate mission for a profession demeans its colleagues and the actual history of excellence of the profession... We believe DBAE material seems to have seriously missed what John Dewey actually stood for as an educator and aesthetician. And finally we are concerned about how complacent DBAE is about the structural flaws in our system of schooling, its dehumanization of people, its vivisection of knowledge, its inability to comprehend the whole for its myopic focus on parts (London 1988, p.3).

I have chosen to return to that history of excellence and critical inquiry by focusing on the works of Lowenfeld, London, and Burton rather than follow in the footsteps of Discipline Based Art Education. Lowenfeld is considered to be one of the most influential and significant voices in the field of art education (Ed. Michael 1982).

In the light of his own resentment of labels, I doubt that Lowenfeld would feel comfortable with the fact that he is often regarded as the best representative of the "child-centered" philosophy of art education. His recommendations for teachers were framed with a deep commitment to democracy as the social foundation for education. For Lowenfeld the freedom to become an individual was a political premise for education, not merely a psychological guidepost. Intellectual growth was clearly important to him, but he did not regard it as independent of other aspects of human development—the social, emotional, creative, aesthetic, and physical dimensions of learning. He was against the mindless development of skills and the exclusive attention given to subject-matter learning which he saw in many schools and which, unfortunately, have been exacerbated by the back-to-basics, minimum-competency movement of the last decade (Chapman, Ed. Michael, 1982, p. xii).

Lowenfeld (1968) emphatically articulates that the greatest mission of education is to be able to develop all of exact individual's creative-artistic-perceptual-empathetic potential and enable these capabilities to flourish. He believes that the unfolding of these capabilities also promotes the development of human sensitivities and values while involving the individual in a search for self and human relationship. He pre-echoes Noddings, Martin, and hooks and West in his call for the development of spiritual and relational values, for the developing of the whole individual, and for recognizing the void of scientific and technological advancement when not accompanied by spiritual drive, social community, freedom, creativity, and self-knowledge (Lowenfeld 1968).

...in Lowenfeld, we have, I believe, the most penetrating understanding of the powers of the creative process to not only decorate and celebrate the lives we have, but to make whole a partial, fractured life, and to make a divided society, entire. A utopian visionary to be sure, but one who has a pedagogy to match, that is, carefully conceived teaching strategies to bring this about now, in the schools that we have now, to a society that is in desperate need of this now. (London 1998, p. 61).

The domain of the visual arts is a richly multidimensional symbol system. We need to be able, as educators, to understand, acknowledge, and address this complexity in order to gain insights into the relationships between visual arts engagement and the learning needs of all of our students. These understandings will be pedagogically significant and will provide guidelines for refining instruction, for designing integrative and interdisciplinary curriculum, for advancing critical literacy for both teachers and students, and for cultivating a compassionate community within and beyond our classrooms (Friere and Macedo 1984, Olson 1992, Graves 1994, Avery 1993, Kahan and Cocur 1996, Chalmers 1996). Ultimately the principles of developing compassionate community via engagement in the visual arts may be applied to the full spectrum of the educational community: administrators, teachers, families, and, most significantly, the learner. We can cultivate various modes of communication, plurality of voice, diversity of language, multiple literacies, creativity, and development of the whole self. We prepare the canvas, to use the metaphor of Grumet (1988), for the fullest education for all children without exception and for the prevention of the marginalization of any individual.

CHAPTER III

MODE OF INQUIRY

The Compositional Framework: My Approach to Inquiry

I have prepared a philosophical thesis in which I have described my conceptual claims, presented supports and illustrations of my claims, and considered the implications of my vision. Scriven (1988) reminds us that we, as educators, struggle with people and individuals, with concepts of knowledge and learning, with the imparting of knowledge, and with the aims of education. We are intrinsically bound to philosophical issues and dilemmas in the course of our daily work, let alone our research. However, philosophically centered questions and issues that should be fundamental to the educator and the educational researcher too often remain as implicit or tacit understandings rather than explicitly articulated goals and guiding principles. As I present, describe, and analyze my conceptual framework, I provide explicit philosophical aims and discuss actual means of their achievement based upon documented experiences. I am advocating a particular way of being in community as my vision. I have provided experiential examples of this community drawn from my own teaching and teaching partnership with Wendy Oellers at Gilford Elementary School. As a mode of inquiry, this thesis represents an interdisciplinary approach to research that draws upon the traditions of philosophy, ethnography, post modern feminist, and emancipatory educational research. This constellation offers myself and the reader multiple perspectives and the opportunity for dialogical engagement, self-reflection, and future action.

Patti Lather, in her essay “Research as Praxis,” emphasizes the “need to connect our research methodology to our theoretical concerns and commitments” (Lather 1986, p. 258). She describes a postpositivistic deconstruction of research paradigms with prescriptive rules and boundaries for truth seeking as she simultaneously reminds us that there is no one truth. “There is no ‘the truth’; [nor] ‘a truth’—truth is not one thing, or even a system. It is an increasing complexity” (Rich 1979, p. 187, quoted by Lather 1986, p. 259). Such complexity needs to be addressed through multiple means of making sense of human life and necessitates scholarship that acknowledges socially constructed and historically embedded

knowledge, invites new models of inquiry, and recognizes multiple ways of knowing (Mishler 1979, Lather 1986, Keller 1985, Eisner 1998, and Rorty 1979).

I understand that some people, empiricist researchers, for example, may take issue with this point of view. However, I have chosen this mode of inquiry due to the nature of my question, which addresses the development of care communities in our schools and the possible relationships between art-making and community-making. This question involves values, beliefs, emotions, intimate relationships, and forms of artistic expression while seeking a particular vision of community and relationship which can be practiced, nurtured, and developed. As such, I begin with an open question of possibility with the intent of provoking, as Greene advocates, “new modes of thinking” (Greene 1991. p. x), which will offer novel resources for use in classrooms.

... we are challenged to choose among a spectrum of alternatives in the course of reconceiving what it is to teach and what it is to learn. As the authors say [Witherall and Noddings], we are “invited” to enter conversation, one not quite like any we have participated in before... Ethics, critical reading, religion, ethnography, collaborative work in research, or the gathering of “teacher lore”—readers will find their own centers, their own fundamental concerns. As we do, we will find the old poses of detachment and distance no longer tempting or acceptable. The separation between subject and object will no longer exist, nor will the comforting assurances of cool and shining certainties. Finding our way in this new domain of possibilities, we will be engaged, and we will be in search (Greene 1991, p.x).

Lather (1986) also advocates a praxis-oriented empowering form of research where the researcher is not neutral and is “openly committed to critiquing the status quo and building a more just society.” She is concerned with the generation of knowledge that will enhance awareness and direct our attention to the possibilities of transformation. Inherent in this approach is an ongoing dialogue between the researcher and the researched and a deep respect for the experiences of people in their daily lives. Both the researcher and the researched become the changer and the changed. I add the possibility of change for the reader-audience and unknown others. “...the research process enables people to change by encouraging self-reflection and a deeper understanding of their particular situation” (Lather 1986, p. 263).

A relationship of intimate reciprocity develops and detachment becomes involvement. There is a commitment to “open-ended, dialectical theory building that aspires to focus on and resonate with lived experience” (Lather 1986, p. 262). Lather turns to feminist researchers such as Fine and Oakley to support

involvement, personalization, and reciprocity in research that will powerfully resonate with lived experience. She supports research and scholarship that represents theory growing from contextualized situations, utilizes embedded data, has an emancipatory intent, emphasizes “passionate scholarship” (Lather 1986, p.267), and leads to reflexive inquiry in hitherto uncharted territory. Fine and Kidder (1987) assert that open-ended questions can “provide greater ‘richness’ or ‘latitude’ and...allow for the unexpected. Researchers who work inductively continue to generate hypothesis and look for new questions as they gather data” (Fine and Kidder 1987, pp. 59-60). Thus, open-questioned inquiry can provide for ongoing discovery and more holistic perception.

...fieldworkers do not uniformly measure the x and y attributes of every person or group because it is not obvious that the research is about x and y. Instead, they gather people’s stories or events, the researcher develops a narrative, an account of what led to what, and each new story or event is used to confirm or revise the narrative (Fine and Kidder 1987, p. 60).

Within the writing of such stories, the use of analogy and metaphor provide means of developing enhanced understandings and the potential for readers to discover parallels between and across situations-settings-cases that could otherwise remain unrelated. Eisner (1998) also advocates the need for new approaches to educational research that support what he describes as an enlightened eye (engaged and insightful looking and perceiving) and artful modes of telling the research story. He echoes Fine (1987) and Keller (1985) believing that, in essence, all research is a form of story.

...To see is to experience qualities...both the content of the world and the content of our imaginations are dependent upon qualities...It is through the perception of qualities...that our consciousness comes into being. The enlightened eye is about the perception of qualities, those that pervade intimate social relations and those that constitute complex social institutions such as schools. It is also about the meaning of those qualities and the value we assign to them...How do we tell the story of our experience? In a way that will evoke and involve understanding? The arts and the humanities have provided a long tradition of ways of describing, interpreting, and appraising the world: History, art, literature, drama, poetry, and music are among the most important forms through which humans have represented and shaped their experiences. These forms have not been significant in educational inquiry for reasons that have to do with a limited and limiting conception of knowledge...One must be able to use language to reveal what, paradoxically, words can never say. This means that voice must be heard in the text, alliteration allowed, and cadences encouraged. Relevant allusions should be employed, and metaphor that adumbrates by suggestion used. All of these devices and more are as much a part of the tool kit of those conducting qualitative inquiry as analysis of variance is for those working in conventional quantitative research modes (Eisner 1998, pp. 1, 2, 4).

Eisner cites fellow researchersSizer, Peshkin, Lightfoot, and Jackson as being able to tell the story of their

naturalistic inquiry in a manner that does not compromise the use of figurative and interpretive language. Langer (1942) has emphasized that the languages we use to look, to see, and to communicate influence our capacities of perception. The traditional language of the empirical sciences, propositional language and the use of representational symbols, she reminds us, cannot take the impress of the life of feeling. Feeling requires the languages of the arts and the use of presentational symbols. We need to be able to utilize language fully in order to perceive fully and describe what we have seen and what we hope our readers will come to understand. I may state the fact that the leaves on the birch trees in front of my window are green. I may express that the almond shaped leaves of the birch tree dance like butterflies in the wind creating a sea of soft green, deeper green, and sunlit green waves softly rustling at the shore of my window... Which conveys more qualities? More associations and understandings concerning these qualities? More relationships? More meaning? More empathy? If research really tells a story, then the richness, vividness, and depth of description in addition to the narration of the story provide for depth of meaning and understanding. We can penetrate the surface and find the meanings events hold for those who experience them (Geertz 1973 and Eisner 1998).

Viewpoint and Vantage Point: Subjectivity and Situation

Since my earliest studies in research methodologies, I have been drawn to qualitatively oriented forms of research that emphasize the situated context and subjectivity of the researcher and that simultaneously acknowledge and address the subjectivity of the individuals within the research.

...A feminist methodology of social sciences requires that...the mythology of "hygienic" research with its accompanying mystification of the researcher and the researched as objective instruments of data production, be replaced by the recognition that personal involvement is more than a dangerous bias—it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives (Oakley 1981, p. 58, quoted by Weiler 1987, p. 62).

Weiler emphasizes the need for educational research to acknowledge and illuminate the conscious subjectivity of the researcher and for the researcher to acknowledge, examine, and share their subjectivity and situatedness. In a sense, I, as the researcher, am my primary instrument. I bring my sensibilities, sensitivities, conceptual framework, experiences, and motivations to my work (Eisner 1998 and Keller 1985). My subjectivity and views, when presented openly, dialogically, and narratively can also invite

others.

My subjectivity is functional and the results are rational. But if they are rational only to me and no one else, not now or ever, then I have spawned illusions and my views are bound to be ignored. When I disclose what I have seen, my results invite other researchers to look where I did and see what I saw. My ideas are candidates for others to entertain, not necessarily as truth, let alone Truth, but as positions about the nature and meaning of phenomenon that may fit their sensibility and shape their thinking about their own inquiries. If, somehow all researchers were alike, we would tell the same story (insofar as its non-denotable aspects are concerned) about the same phenomenon. By virtue of subjectivity, I tell the story I am moved to tell. Reserve my subjectivity and I do not become a value-free participant observer, merely an empty-headed one (Peshkin 1985, p.280).

My voice, the narrative I, my subjectivity, can still present many points of view to be considered and pursued. Fine (1987) describes a heteroglossic view of research stories, considering the story as having been constructed through an analysis of many individual stories that necessitates the consideration of multiple points of view and the presentation of these multiple stories. The “story” may also develop as the fieldwork unfolds, often developing a life of its own and incorporating “particular actors in the field and their perspectives shape the story” (Fine 1987, p.69).

It is not so much a matter of ultimately achieving a coherent integration among the many perspectives as one of being intellectually versatile or theoretically eclectic (Schwab 1969). It is a matter of being able to handle several ways of seeing as a series of differing views rather than reducing all views to a single correct one (Eisner 1998, p.49).

The presence of my voice and my subjectivity accompanied by my use of expressive, presentational language also provide me with an very important bridge to understanding and envisionment by my readers and my co-researcher. Through the engagement of empathy and association my readers’ voices are added to the conversation.

Empathy pertains to feeling or to emotion, and emotion, interestingly, is often regarded as the enemy of cognition. I reject such a view. To read about people or places or events that are emotionally powerful and to receive an eviscerated account is to read something of a lie. Why take the heart out of the situations we are trying to help readers understand? (Eisner 1998, p.37).

This empathy is enhanced through the use of story. Empathy further invites care rather than detachment. As Noddings describes, through the telling of stories we “annex the otherness of others” (Noddings 1992, p. 202). We can begin to find ourselves in the stories of others gaining new perspectives, reflections, and insights. We enter into conversation.

The Artist: Reconceptualizing the Researcher

Thus far, I have been discussing an approach to inquiry that incorporates the researcher's subjectivity, voice, and involvement into a narrative story that can penetrate to the finding of multiple layers of meaning across diverse experiences. This is an approach that invites participation and involvement of the reader. This is a text inviting dialectic engagement and reflexive inquiry. As such, I further ask, can we not integrate both the artistic and the scholarly in such writing? I strove to integrate both the artistic and the scholarly in this writing, believing that these are not antithetical attributes but are mutually reinforcing. Madelaine Grumet (1988) eloquently describes teaching as an art form. She emphasizes the need to reconceptualize the teacher as an artist. As artists we are creators. The root meaning of the word create is to fit together, to find relationships and connections. Each time we fit things together, we are creating.

Creativity belongs to the artist in each of us...Not all of us are painters but we are all artists. Each time we fit things together we are creating—whether it is to make a loaf of bread, a child, a day. As teachers, we try to participate in the process of empowering people to be the artists they are. And as artists, we accept the responsibility to create—to realize our immense powers to change things, to fit things together in a new way. As artists we work every day. We make our own lives every day, we care for our family every day. It is hard daily work, this creative process. But it is also greater than personal. We are asked to create for others as we—helping them to create their own lives as we were helped. Our work is global—we are asked literally to help make the countries of the world fit together in new ways...all our creative skills are needed to keep up this tremendous work. And we work on it so that we and our children may have a world in which to fulfill our reason for being here—which is to create...There is an energy in the creative process that belongs in the league of those energies that can uplift, unify, and harmonize all of us. This energy we call “making,” is the relating of parts to make a new whole... in a way, the maker (artist) gives us a small taste of that larger art—the new world we are trying to build—a world in which each person, each country, lives in harmonious relationship...(Kent 1992, pp.4, 5).

Teachers do not have to be passive agents of enculturation and transmitters of standardized curricula.

Teachers can be wondrous beings: agents of change, empowerment, heightened awareness, and envisionment. We are artists and creators. Can we also reconceptualize the researcher as an artist, applying Grumet's understanding of the artistic attitude as being one of challenge to taken-for-granted values and culture? If so, the research text as a work of art would

...cleanse a familiar scene, washing away the habit and dust collected over time so that it is seen anew. When it is most radical, the work of art draws the viewer to it, engaging expectations, memories, recognitions, and simultaneously interrupts the viewer's customary responses, contradicting expectations with new possibilities, violating memories, displacing recognition

with estrangement (Grumet 1988, p.79).

We view the world with fresh vision leaving behind our habituated consciousness and superficial attention.

We begin to see!

Annie Rogers (1993) describes her research involving the inner life of women and adolescent girls as necessitating artistry in both the form of her actual research and the subsequent writing about her research. She describes her approach as a poetics of research.

...the form of research and of writing about research itself must become artistic. Writing in an artistic, subjective voice is not an impediment to theory building, but allows me to build theory and use theory to make suggestions for educational practice ...feminist methodology is a theory or set of guidelines about how to [reject the belief that one can separate the “subjectivity” of the researcher from the “object” of her research and, in fact, creates research practices that close the inevitable gap between the researcher and the participants in the research (see also Cook & Fonow 1990, Ladner 1987). Feminist methodologists also reject the belief in universal laws or truths and seek out ways to limit the power of researchers to make global generalizations (Rogers 1998, Eds. Woyshner and Gelfond, pp. 195-96).

As such, the researcher is a participant, interpreter, and author with a subjective presence. So, too, the reader, with whom I wish to engage through this writing. If I am to initiate a dialogue with my readers that addresses implicit values and beliefs concerning education, the arts, and community; their subjective presence, I believe, must be awakened. In essence, I am addressing the inner life of my reader and asking for critical and insightful dialogue, reflection, analysis, and consideration in order to open wider, as Greene (1998) advocates, the possibility of praxis. I return to the words of Grumet:

The women who would teach to provide a path to a richer, fuller sense of human possibility and agency, must read the shadows of their stories to recover their intentionality, in order to understand our own experiences of teaching we must truly stand under them in those places where the bluebirds never fly (Grumet 1988, p.74).

Within these shadows we may find the means of making explicit what has hitherto remained hidden, tacit, or unfulfilled. We need to reach well within the deepest layers of our Selves to reawaken our voices, to find our own stories, address our pain if necessary, and begin discussion anew.

The Palette: How the Story Is Told

Stories and narratives may be told in many ways using many different forms of expression. Here I

rely on the written word. As such, my intentionality and location must be made clear just as my voice needs to be heard. Thus, I have engaged in a conceptual analysis that weaves together my literature review, anecdotal evidence, illustrations, and definitions of the core concepts that compose the tapestry of my vision. Three forms of definition have been applied: denotative, connotative, and stipulative. Consider the concept of teacher as artist: The denotative definition from the Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1947, p.61) defines an artist as "One versed in the learned arts. An artisan. a schemer. One specially skilled in the practice of a manual art or occupation..." Connotative interpretations would include cultural stereotypes and assumptions.

The artist could then be one who draws and paints photorealistically, who is eccentric and irrational, usually poor and out of work, behaves immorally, is flighty, not very smart or he or she would do something else for a living, is nonconforming, maybe dangerous, and doesn't really ever work...The stipulative definition would be my clarification and detailed description of the teacher as artist. I can reconceptualize the stereotype, elaborate upon and add specific detail to the denotative definition. I can provide a configuration of attributes and characteristics. I specify the artist as one who is able to fit things together, to make, to find relationships and connections, to create. The artist is one who is an agent of change, empowerment, and envisionment...I then connect these qualities to the teacher.

Concepts are further clarified by the presentation of examples that illustrate the core of meaning, that exemplify antithesis, and that provide borderline examples. I have so exemplified my meanings and tried to situate my viewpoint in relation to other theorists. Philosophical researchers traditionally use simile, analogy, metaphor, and highly descriptive language in order to develop clarity of understanding and to provide for multiple viewing of any concept. The juxtapositioning of such carefully selected metaphorical elements leads to a focus of association and thus to clarity of meaning (Snook and Scriven from Ed. Jaeger 1988). The use of these devices further adds to the artistry of my writing while increasing the potential for associative understandings and empathy to develop.

A metaphor for educational experience will illuminate some aspects of educational practice and leave others in shadows. A metaphor will influence not only what it is described but also the form the description takes, its knowledge claims, and the response of those who attend to it. The selection of these metaphors [aesthetic forms] for educational experience combines observation with hope. They serve as emblems for a good deal

of educational practice while providing an ideal towards which that practice might move (Grumet 1988, p.80).

I apply the language of the visual arts to develop my metaphors. This choice reflects my beliefs that teaching and learning are dynamic creative and transformative processes that have the potential to bring us to a state of heightened awareness, consciousness, and envisionment. I have consistently used the metaphors of composing a painting and weaving a tapestry. These metaphors also embody my belief in the uniqueness of each learner we teach—as unique as each color I would prepare for a palette or as each individual fiber selected for weaving. Each is of utmost importance regarding singularity and uniqueness. As colors are placed together, developing relationships to one another, each one affects and effects the other in a constantly changing and evolving situatedness and construction of meaning. So, too, children and the classroom community. The addition of even the most minute of brushstrokes or color upon the canvas completely changes the perception of the whole and the interdynamics of the whole. As a painter, I am constantly adjusting to these changes: some infinitesimal and others quite obvious, striving to remain in harmony with my initial vision yet to be able to be as responsive as possible to the emerging image—even when completely different than originally envisioned.

I have drawn upon my experiences as an artist, an instructor of art education, an art educator, and as a first-grade collaborative teaching partner with Wendy Oellers at Gilford Elementary School to provide a rich array of anecdotal and illustrative descriptions and examples. The resulting text is a combination of philosophical inquiry, autobiography, and narrative. The incorporation of anecdotal and narrative vignettes weaves different scenes, characters, and concepts together while providing for the development of personalized identification, empathetic interaction, and involvement by my readers. I am able, through the use of narrative, to bring the reader closer into these experiences as another participant and as another situated interpreter. The form of anecdotal narrative gives me the opportunity to reach inside and make connections between our individual experiences and the ongoing development of our critical consciousness. Narrative provides for the locating of experiences and crossing boundaries between experiences. Narrative “leads us inward, to individual experience, and outward to metatheory” (Grumet 1992, p.4) while ultimately “returning us to ourselves” (Pinar 1992, p.93).

The “I” is the location of a stream of possibilities...if subjectivity is invited to be multiple, varied, and still coherent, objectivity, that which is

related to other than consciousness, is also fluid. Categorical meanings are suspended whenever possible, in the composing process, of these narratives [autobiographical] for we are seeking not an illustration of our categories but a dialectical interplay of our experiences of the world and our way of thinking about it... In this way, the literary narrative that is autobiography resembles the social event which is curriculum. Both function as mediating forms that gather the categorical and the accidental, the anticipated and the unexpected, the individual and the collective. The gap or error or surprise that erupts in the midst of the well made text is what deconstructivists seek, not to embarrass the author, but to demonstrate that the power of the person, the text, the meaning, is spurious when we impute to it an utterly consistent, exclusive, delineated, and bounded logic (Grumet 1988, pp.66-7).

Through the use of narrative, I can keep the sense of multiple voices (and stories) in dialogue with one another—within the text and beyond—crossing into the life of the reader.

When making art with children (and with all individuals), when sharing our art with one another, we enter into intimate relationships with one another—relationships involving the inner life and care relationships (London 1989, Lowenfeld 1982). I have engaged with my students, I have shared in the making and beholding of their art, and I have observed their experiences as a co-participant and community member. As I re-present their spoken words, written words, images, and actions in this text, I am re-presenting shared narratives, personal stories, and intimate expressions. We have been in authentic and caring relationships with one another. Thus, I do reveal myself in my work, just as Rogers (1993) described the bringing of her self, psyche, soul, mind, and spirit to her work. This innately subjective and situated self is part of my work. As I present my observations and interpretations, no matter how precisely and specifically replicated, I observe, interpret, and present through the lenses of my beliefs and values. Even as I have entered into multiple dialogues with others, ever expanding my awareness, perceptions, and understandings, my situatedness and subjectivity remain as part of my autobiography.

I have acknowledged this very situatedness and my innate subjectivity and have tried to use them as “touchstones” (Rogers 1993) for the ongoing development of relationships, dialogues, shared narratives, and interpretations throughout the research process. The complexity of these interrelationships and understandings form the metaphorical tapestry/painting of my vision. These relationships extend to the readers of this text. We bring our collective life experiences, insights, and understanding together, which creates a new dialogue of agreement, disagreement, questioning, and exploring. I do not seek a universal truth. My intent is that the clarity and vividness of my composing will enable the reader to enter into this

tapestry, explore, and be persuaded that this vision may be possible. I reiterate the words of Annie Rogers:

The language of empirical “science,” the language of formal propositions, of tests and proofs, Suzanne Langer (1942) tells us, cannot take that press or imprint of inner life, the life of feeling. To convey this life, the language of the arts is required. When the inner life ...is the subject of empirical research... the form of research and of writing about research itself must become artistic. Writing in an artistic, subjective voice is not an impediment to theory building, but allows me to build theory and to make suggestions for educational practice... (Rogers 1993, Eds. Woyshner and Gelfond 1998, pp. 195-6).

Thus my writing seeks to retain and evoke this life of feeling and be sensitive to that inner self. A care community revolves around coming to know one another and the development of caring relationships. Can such relationships be extended to those who read this text? Developing empathy through shared dialogues and narratives may provide such a path.

The Gallery: Credibility and Validity

Even as we acknowledge that education is never neutral nor research never neutral (Lather 1989), as we acknowledge the need for heart and the use of expressive form in educational research, and as we acknowledge the need for multiple perspectives and new approaches to inquiry, we still need to address concerns for credibility. We need to establish trustworthiness, to reduce ambiguity, and to affirm validity. Lather suggests that our “best shot at present is to construct research designs that push us toward becoming vigorously self aware” (Lather 1989, p. 66). She suggests the use of a combination of triangulation, reflexivity, and member checks as means for assuring credibility. Specifically, she advocates the use of the guidelines that I have listed and defined below according to her stipulations.

1. Triangulation: Using multiple sources for observation, applying multiple methods for data

gathering, and developing a strong theoretical framework representing many voices.

2. Face Validity: Applying member checks and engaging in reflective and analytical dialogue with

research subjects concerning ongoing findings and questions; empowering the researched to become co-researchers, to enable the mutual discussion of findings and engage in collaborative interpretation. Data is recycled in an emerging analysis that emphasizes a reciprocity between the researcher and the researched. Interactive and involved dialogue and reflection are pursued.

3. Construct Validity: Developing a strong conceptual analysis and literary review while further invoking

self-reflexivity.

4. Catalytic Validity: Analyzing the degree to which the research project reorients, focuses, and energizes the participants in conscientization and impacts empowerment and the vivification of ideas confirms and affirms the process as one of leading to insight and activism on the part of the respondents. The researcher engages in an ongoing negotiation of meanings and the construction of knowledge together with respondents.

In order to clarify further “catalytic validity,” I include Fine’s stipulations as quoted by Lather.

Catalytic validity represents the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes participants towards knowing reality in order to transform it, a process Friere (1973) terms conscientization. Of the guidelines proposed here, this is by far the most unorthodox; it flies in the face of the positivist demand for researcher-neutrality. The argument for catalytic validity is premised not only with reality-altering impact of the research process, but also in the desire to consciously channel this impact so the respondents gain self-understanding, and ultimately, self determination through research participation (Fine quoted by Lather 1989, p. 272).

Fine (1987) adds the following procedures as means of developing reciprocity: dialogic interviews, sequential interviews, negotiations of meaning, and discussions that address false consciousness. She reminds us that validity is not only for the purposes of affirmation and support but also for the discovery of ongoing problems, discrepancies, and the collection of alternative points of view and multiple perspectives.

Eisner (1998) states that credibility can be established via a combination of considerations: coherence and consistency, triangulated corroboration, consensus, and utility; but he warns that each alone may be misleading. His explication of utility parallels Lather’s and Fine’s concerns for catalytic validity: the enhancement of understanding and the contribution and guidance towards future action. As our experience is deepened and broadened, so, too, our understanding and capabilities of envisionment. I believe that I have addressed these guidelines throughout my work and present a constellation of procedures and consideration that support the trustworthiness of my thesis. Let me return to Lather’s (1989) list of guidelines and identify my methods categorically.

1. Triangulation and Corroboration:

***I have presented a strongly developed conceptual analysis and a comprehensive literary review representing multiple and interdisciplinary perspectives that have developed a firm conceptual framework.**

***I have presented myself from a variety of self-perspectives: artist, student, university instructor, public school art educator, supervisor, team teacher, researcher, and individual. My subjectivity has many facets that have been acknowledged.**

***My work at Gilford Elementary School has involved many forms of documentation, which I list below:**

- Personal reflective observation journals.**
- Dialogic interviews with three parents during the spring semester. One is tape recorded and two are in both written and audio form.**
- Two taped interviews with Principal Tocci.**
- A video of Principal Tocci and Wendy discussing the integration of the arts at Gilford that was part of a community television broadcast.**
- Dialogic interviews with three additional teachers who worked with the class: the art educator, the physical education teacher, and the science specialist.**
- I engaged in a midyear visual art portfolio review with each student. These reviews were videotaped.**
- I engaged in a year-end interview with each student. These interviews were videotaped.**
- Throughout the year, class activities were videotaped.**
- The writing journals of the children were constantly reviewed by Wendy and myself.**
- Wendy has documented report cards and standardized test scores in reading for each student.**
- Visual art was presented in ongoing displays in the classroom and in the corridor. These displays and exhibitons were videotaped as were individual artworks.**
- Wendy and I engaged in reflective dialogue on a daily and weekly basis. Videotapes, interviews, and children's work were discussed as were observations of children's needs and behaviors, learning, challenges, insights, and ongoing planning. Our dialogue continued with email and telephone conversations.**

2. Construct Validity:

As previously mentioned, I have developed a strong conceptual analysis and literary review using multiple interdisciplinary sources.

3. Face Validity:

Throughout my collaborative teaching with Wendy Oellers at Gilford Elementary School, we have engaged in an ongoing reflective and analytical dialogue in addition to communicating via email and telephone. I believe that we have exemplified interactive negotiation of meaning and a reciprocity of reflection, learning, and research. We have developed an intimate personal and professional relationship as we passionately discussed our mutual and our different observations, analyses, concerns, insights, questions, affirmations, problems, and visions. We agreed to disagree and identify areas where we had different points of view or disagreements. We agreed to share anxieties, questions, and challenges. Our discussions included

Wendy's particular concerns for the children's language arts development and my concerns for the development of community. We both acknowledged our mutual desires to be able to negotiate meanings with the intent of gaining insights and to work collaboratively toward change as needed. Of course we wanted affirmations and confirmation but we were also looking for problems and new questions. Our mutual insights, perceptions, and analyses could keep us flexible, sensitive, and adaptive. This reflexive dialogue has been extended to Wendy as a critical reader of this dissertation for I wish to acknowledge her presence as a co-researcher and I wish to ensure that her point of view has been respected and included. I also wish to ensure the accuracy of my descriptions, reflections, and analyses that I present regarding our experiences teaching together at Gilford. In essence, we have cooperated with one another as mutually reflexive and reflective lenses.

4. Catalytic Validity (see chapter 8)

This validity will ultimately be interpreted by the reader. However, I know that my work at Gilford has led to activism, insight, and change in Wendy's teaching and my own. This research has served to heighten her awareness and affirmation of her core philosophical beliefs and values concerning education. Together we acted upon our work and developed an instructional model (see appendix) which has been approved by the school committee and has been implemented by a pilot team of four teachers, including Wendy. This new school year of 1999-2000 will see the addition of three more teachers. Both of us have been involved with professional development and a presentation at the 1999 New England Reading conference. Our future plans include national presenting and writing. We have both changed and grown. The school is responding to our work and supporting our model. The model continues to grow and change and evolve. New teachers are joining us and working with us. And the children? Their story is woven into this thesis. I believe they have been empowered as whole human beings and wondrously unique Selves. You will make your own inferences. The invitation is here for you and my hope is that those of you who respond to this invitation will experience insight, empathy, understanding, questioning, and the envisionment of possibilities.

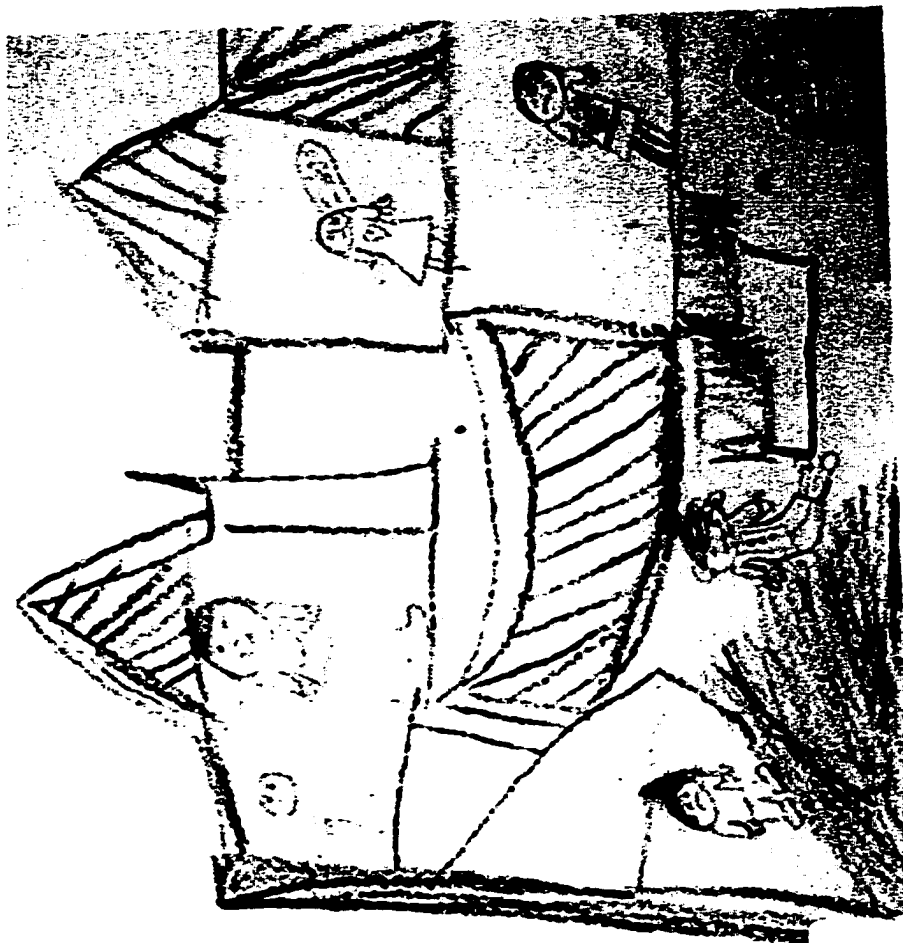
I return to the words of Michelle Fine as words of encouragement and inspiration.

This essay has one central argument: a more collaborative approach to critical inquiry is needed to empower the researched, to build emancipatory theory, and to move toward the establishment of data credibility within a praxis-oriented, advocacy research. The present turmoil in the human sciences frees us to construct new designs based upon alternative tenets

and epistemological commitments. My goal is to move research in many different and, indeed, contradictory directions in the hope that more interesting and useful ways of knowing will emerge. Rather than establishing a new orthodoxy, we need to experiment, document, and share our efforts towards emancipatory research (Fine 1986, p.272).

This thesis may be far from orthodox but I hope it will be compelling, thought provoking, and inspirational. This is the story of a vision of possibility for developing compassionate communities in our school classrooms and for using visual arts engagement as a bridge to self and to communities of care. Robert Cole has said that it is through stories that we have the capability of entering another's life (1989). I have woven stories throughout this telling and sought a fusion of scholarship and artistry. These stories provide pathways to meaning and relationship. "The story fabric offers images, myths, and metaphors that are morally resonant and contribute both to our knowing and being known" (Witherall and Noddings 1991, p. 7). Let us weave this fabric together.





2. No One Will Play
With Me and I'm Sad
by Mariah - March

CHAPTER IV

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY

Please call me by my true names,
So I can wake up,
And so the door to my heart can be left open,
The door of compassion.

(Thich Nhat Hahn 1987, p. 64)

Story: Once Upon a Time...

No one to play with today: A day full of sun and dazzling fall leaves, a perfect day for a seven-year-old girl to journey through the woods to the neighborhood rope swing and fly into the sky...maybe even the other children would be there already playing...She grabs her jacket, ties her sneaker laces, and spins out the back door. Yes, the day is perfect. The woods are perfect. The leaves swoosh around her feet piled high upon the forest floor. Shafts of sunlight illuminate magical spiderwebs. Squirrels chatter in the stillness. No one at the swing. No waiting in line. A great day for flying! She jumps on the swing following a mighty leap propelling her up onto the swing and into the sky, rushing air streaming over her body and swirling her long hair over her shoulders like the streamers of a kite.

She travels higher and higher and higher until the summit of the swing when she seems to pause a tiny second before swooping down and crashing into the earth not really she is gliding in a graceful swooshing pendulum arc now rocking back and forth like the waves against the hull of a sailboat...Close your eyes and you feel like a song...

.PING! PANG! SLAM! STING! THUMP! THUD! OUCH! OW! STOP!!!

Tiny rocks are raining through the sky and they are all aiming at her and they all hurt! Voices tear through the crisp fall air. "Get off our swing creep! You're out-a-here! Loser! ...not one of US!! We don't want you here!" Cruel laughter follows her flight as she escapes from the rocks and the knife-edged words. Tears fall. She remains alone.

Colin is six years old. He has been in first grade for six months now. He is small with elfen features, has a smile that could crack open the sky, and wears large aviator-style glasses without which he

cannot see clearly. For the past three days, Colin has forgotten his glasses and has been peering and stumbling through the school day. His teacher, Ms. O., calls home. The glasses have not been forgotten, they have been tucked away and disowned by Colin. Ms. O., being very concerned for Colin (and for all her students), invites him to share his feelings with her during a private conference. Colin confides that during outdoor recess four days ago, four other boys (not from our class) teased him about his glasses and called him names: sissy, four-eyes, wierd-o, stupid, baby...big boys don't have to wear glasses, strong boys don't wear glasses, we don't wear glasses...Ms.O then invited Colin to share his story and his feelings with his classmates during their morning circle ritual and discussion. The class voiced their opinions that those other boys were being mean and were trying to make Colin feel bad: they were giving Colin sharp pricklies and thorns. They were really mean! The class also shared that all kinds of people wear glasses, it's okay to wear glasses, everyone wears glasses some time, and above all, Colin was their friend and shouldn't listen to those sharp pricklies. We have a class of warm fuzzy givers. The class sent Colin their warm fuzzies in the form of passing a hand squeeze and whispering "I like you" into each other's ear all around the ring of the circle. The next day, Sally arrived in class wearing hot pink sunglasses. She wore them all day explaining that she did not want Colin to feel alone and wanted him to know that glasses can be fun to wear, too! They could both wear their glasses together on the playground and in school. Then Jimmy brought in a pair of lensless glasses to share. So anyone could wear glasses whenever they wanted and so Colin would feel better and not be sad about wearing glasses. Colin was not alone. Colin was surrounded by caring and thoughtful friends and classmates.

Both of these stories are true. The first story actually happened almost forty years ago, a painful memory from my childhood that I had carefully tucked away until Sally and Jimmy told me Colin's story a few months ago and asked me to wear my glasses during circle, too! Both of these stories revolve around relationships and care within the communities of children. One story epitomizes cruelty and disregard while the other describes a marvelous sense of empathy and compassionate concern. How did this empathy and deep care for one another develop within this small community of first graders? How is it that these first graders were able to take the hurtful stones cast at Colin and, instead of building more barriers of separation, build a bridge of understanding, compassion, and care? I hold both of these stories as

possibilities, for each of us has been that child or that victim at one point in our lives, and I hope that each of us has also proffered that healing hand of care...These children are the children I care for and have been working with throughout my field research. Their journey is my journey and the ongoing development of their compassionate community is the fulfillment of a vision that I wish to be able to share with you as parents, teachers, learners, global citizens, and human beings.

Introduction

Within this chapter, I present a discussion of care within school institutions as I posit the need for developing and engaging in I and Thou encounters. I bring forth a specific understanding of care and community that emanates from this core of I-Thou relationship, presenting a spiral constellation of relational values developed from feminist ethics and the lens of engaged Bhuddism. Core concepts of empathy and co-being become explicit educational priorities. I explore the educational manifestations of a compassionate community of interrelatedness and care, providing a series of narrative examples, which clarify and support such manifestations, and their antithesis, in a variety of school locations.

As care becomes explicated, I initiate a discussion of critical care and address the misassumptions and stereotypes of care, which relegate care to an arena of maudlin sentimentality. Instead, I offer an understanding of critical care that presents care in the light of strength, wisdom, resilience, and the development of understanding and awareness. I probe the relationship between care, confirmation, and critical consciousness addressing concerns of challenge, critical dialogue, and confidence that accompany the development of compassionate community and that, in turn, enhance such a community.

Within the discussion of dialogue, I begin addressing the concern for voice, multivoicedness, and multilingualness in order to bridge the boundaries of situatedness, of monologic discourse, and of surface I and it interactions. When the arts, the presentational languages, and, more specifically, the visual arts are valued languages for meaning-making and communication, we open the opportunity for a multiplicity of language forms and for our inner selves to join a dialogue that is sensitive to our diversity of situatedness, language, and the fullest spectrum of voice and self. As we probe these understandings and the accompanying narratives we begin forming a picture of possibility: compassionate communities in our schools.

Vocabulary of Subheadings

As I continued writing and organizing this chapter into progressive sections, I decided that I wanted each subheading to have metaphorical qualities that would imply multiple dimensions of interpretation and support my continual emphasis on interrelationships and the weaving of my experiences as a visual artist, writer, teacher, and researcher. Since some of my readers will not have the direct experience of applying these terms as visual artists, I will provide a brief technical explanation for the purposes of guidance.

The Canvas

I use the term “canvas” to represent the cultural space from which an image develops. During the physical act of painting, the canvas is one of many possibilities for the selection of a surface space upon which to paint. Since canvas is actually a woven cloth, this choice is appropriate to my metaphor of weaving. Even so, the canvas cloth must be selected from an array of weaving densities, patterns, qualities of thread, weights, and even qualities of pigmentation. This selection is then resized, shaped, and even formed. Following this, the surface of the canvas may be treated to provide additional textures, pigmentation, and qualities of absorption. Thus the canvas, although considered a “blank space,” already represents an order of proportional, textural, and absorptive challenges and decisions.

The Underpainting

The “underpainting” is a traditional painting (and drawing) technique that is part of the creative process of developing an image. The underpainting is a monochromatic painting of the intended subject/design that establishes relationships of value and unity across the image as a whole. The underpainting guides the artist to see and understand these essential relationships before the addition of color.

The Palette

“Palette” refers to the choice of colors and color relationships that will be added to the emerging image. Colors add rich qualities of emotion, mood, sensory association, conventional symbolism, personal associations, and physical/psychological temperature in addition to qualities of light and energy. The palette further establishes the range and quality of new colors that will be mixed from this foundation.

Compositional Viewpoint

I use the phrase “compositional viewpoint” to refer to the multiple ways of looking and perceiving as being essential elements of the composing process. Each degree of a physical location or viewpoint/vantage point is unique as are the vast array of psychological-socio-cultural and individual lenses through which we view and experience our world. Every existing and added element to the emerging image affects and effects all other elements, for each part of the composition is essential to the whole and is in a state of dynamic interrelationship. The decision upon viewpoint (actual or imaginary) will determine the resulting composition of relationships just as the socio-cultural-individual viewpoint of the artist will determine the meanings expressed and the socio-cultural-individual viewpoint of the beholder will influence the engagement, interpretation, and meanings communicated.

The Gallery

The “gallery” presents our work to one another whether in an intimate gallery within a safe and caring community space or a more public gallery where strangers and critics may gather. The gallery offers our work, our stories, our images, and our creations to be beheld by others and opens the possibility of dialogue, understanding, heightened awareness, and ongoing transformation. The gallery is a presentation of self that can be fearful, intimidating, and fulfilling. A gallery may be filled with one beholder or many or none.

The Canvas: Community Spaces

School institutions and our larger social communities tend to be ferocious environments where we hide our most precious selves: our imaginative, spiritual, creative, loving, intuitive, and most sensitive selves, which, instead of blossoming, wither and withdraw in such an environment (Paley 1995, Rogers 1993, and London 1997). London asks us to consider the possibility that we, as teachers, can make the context and the environment for learning safe enough, trustworthy enough, and loving enough for these precious selves to rise up, for the innermost self of each student to come forward, and for our inner selves, as teachers, to come forward. Our classrooms could be transformed into, as Greene (1995) invites, the arenas of our mutual becoming: a meeting place of “I and Thou” where that which is of ultimate concern is addressed with deep seriousness. Within this meeting ground of “I and Thou” we could create a mutually cherished and connected space where we turn completely each to the other in a reciprocity of care, concern, and attention. London (1997) reminds us that most of us are addressed invisibly or categorically by others,

from the distance of superficiality, and we in turn so respond, living from surface to surface instead of addressing each other at the multiple levels of our being and our multiple possibilities with utmost seriousness and attention. Consider the force of complete attention when given to each person and to all students within a classroom community.

How often I have experienced, as a visiting supervisor of student teachers, this surface attention: I have observed children painting their hearts out trying to tell the story of their favorite place to be with a friend and have listened to the well-intentioned teacher responding to these monumental efforts with the repeated comments of “that’s very nice, very pretty, I like your picture, it’s a very good picture, very nice, very nice, very nice...” No depths have been probed, no connections made, no full attention given, no meaning shared. Instead, I then begin to interact with various children; asking them to tell me about their paintings, inviting their emotions, memories, ideas, discoveries, and personal meanings with absolute seriousness and attentiveness. I am swept away by their voices and our connections. I, formerly a stranger, have entered into their private and most personal self and I, too, begin to share and we are in that meeting ground. “No one ever asked me what I thought before!” is a passionate statement shared with me by a young student from Boston English High School that will echo within me forever as a reminder to pay attention and to care.

London (1997) further reflects that the effort of “I” to call up the “Thou” in you also calls up the “Thou” in me, leaving my “it” and your “it” (our surface object-selves) behind. I must also reflect upon and ask myself, “What is the Thou in me like? What is the Thou in you like?” and I cannot find this Thou unless I look into and enter what London refers to as the sacred space between us: our meeting ground.

We weave community from this meeting ground of mutual attention and becoming. West (hooks and West 1991) reminds us there can be no true community without mutual understanding, empathy, acceptance, and mercy—without, to use his metaphor, the breaking of bread in communion with one another. He presents very powerful concepts: empathy, community, mercy, acceptance, understanding, communion....so powerful that I decided to seek the root meanings of these words from a source with as definitive an approach as possible—the Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (fifth edition), in an attempt to clarify my understanding of the beginning of their meanings and relationships.

Empathy: the imaginative projection of one’s own consciousness into another.

Compassion: Latin root cum—with/together, French root pati—to bear/to suffer

sorrow or pity excited by the distress or misfortune of another.

An interesting synonym: mercy.

Mercy: the forbearance from inflicting harm, forgiveness, a blessing, and grace.

Grace: kindness, virtue, gentleness, beloved of God, beloved.

Communion: the act of sharing and participation and of being in intimate relationship.

Care: concern, solicitude, anxiety for another's welfare.

Latin root—*carus*—dear.

Dear: beloved, cherished.

Community: a society of people living in a common home.

Home: the abode of family, one's dwelling place...the abiding place of the affections

the vital center, the heart or core, an asylum: an inviolable sanctuary, a place of retreat and security.

Acceptance: to receive with favor and consent, to understand.

Understand: to apprehend purport or meaning, to gather or infer signification, to interpret,

to learn or be informed, and to comprehend fully the implications of a situation and have a consequently tolerant or sympathetic attitude.

As I review these definitions, I find myself on a circular path interwoven with belovedness, relationship, sanctuary, and connection. Within such a circle, each of us would feel beloved, would feel belonging and acceptance, would give of our inner self, and would know that our voice of self is not only wondrously unique but joined to others. Through our relation and connection to others and through our service to others, we develop and promote understanding, compassion, the enlargement of spirit, and the transformation of despair and fear into trust and fulfillment (hooks and West 1991). I use the symbol of a circle not as a geometric configuration of enclosure, but in the sense of the Lakota Indians where the circle is the medicine circle, a symbol of the universe and the infinity of connected interrelationships. This medicine circle is within and without each of us, connecting each of us to every aspect of the universe and to one another. This circle has neither boundaries nor limitations.

Well learned distinctions between public and private make us believe that love has no place in the classroom...some of the suspicion is that the

presence of feelings, of passions, may not allow for objective consideration of each student's merit. But this notion is based on the false assumption that education is neutral, that there is some "even" emotional ground we stand on that enables us to treat everyone equally, dispassionately. In reality, special bonds between professors and students have always existed, but traditionally they have been exclusive rather than inclusive. To allow one's feeling of care and will to nurture particular individuals in the classroom—to expand and embrace everyone—goes against the notion of privatized passion...as Thomas Merton suggests in his essay on pedagogy, "Learning to Live," the purpose of education is to show students how to define themselves "authentically and spontaneously in relation" to the world...[to] discover the ground of their being in relation to themselves, to higher powers, to community (hooks 1994, pp. 198-9).

West (hooks and West 1991) describes a contemporary dilemma of faith and spirituality and expresses his concern over the seemingly all pervasive alienation of individuals from their inner selves, their spirit, their family, and community. I sadly agree with his assessment of bourgeois class sensibility, media corruption, and growing selfishness that have replaced our personal existential knowledge of self, our active concern for others, our sensitivity and appreciation of diversity, and our intolerance for injustice. West (hooks and West 1991) continually stresses the need to raise our consciousness and be able to find our home within one another. This is the home that provides the path towards a global vision of class, gender, and environmental issues that ultimately lead us back within the circle of subjective community.

How can we begin to establish a communicative partnership in the larger tapestries of community and world if we can not achieve harmony and understanding and love within our selves and our intimate relations? How can we begin to formulate a wider ethical vision? Above all, how, West asks, can we combat the contemporary existential dilemma and move from nihilism to meaning? This question, I believe, links directly to spirituality, self-love, affirmation, and love. Love becomes the core for the development of all relational values: commitment, loyalty, patience, persistence, compassion, care, etc., without which, we have only alienation, fear, rage, and despair. West develops a spiral of self-concept, love, partnership, community, relationship, service, joy, and fulfillment all linked together and intertwined. I believe that it is this *spiraled constellation* that can become the means of counteracting the contemporary impoverishment of spirit, the prevalence of commodification, and the despair of nihilism. Consider the title of the book he has coauthored with b.hooks, Breaking Bread. I know that when I bake bread I infuse it with love. When I break bread, I share life and love.

The Underpainting: An Ethic of Care

What is the role of this spiral constellation of relational values in education? According to Martin (1992) and Noddings (1984 and 1992), the main aim of schooling is moral: to nurture the growth of competent, caring, loving, and lovable persons rather than the traditional drive for academic achievement and competitive success. The primary goal of education must be, they affirm, the development of the full human being and full human growth: heart, soul, body, and mind—not a bifurcated, fragmented, alienated, and imbalanced growth developed from a narrow set of human capacities focused primarily on mathematical-linguistic skills and that neglects not only the full range of human intelligences as researched by Gardner (1983) but also the many facets and layers of our being, our possibility, and our innermost self.

The essence of Noddings' philosophy, I believe, is care and relationship. As Diller (1988) describes, Noddings is providing a new ethical paradigm which breaks away from the tradition of questioning rights and justice principles and acknowledges a core ontology of relation. Morality is rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness, rooted in an innate longing for goodness inherent, she believes, in all human beings. Noddings affirms the human affective response as the wellspring of ethical behavior and the human condition of relationship and natural caring as the ethical ideal.

...the relation of natural caring will be identified as the human condition that we, consciously or unconsciously perceive as "good". It is that condition toward which we long and strive and it is our longing for caring—to be in relation—that provides the motivation for us to be moral. We want the moral in order to remain in caring relation and to enhance the ideal of ourselves as one-caring . (Noddings 1984, p. 5).

Both Martin and Noddings stress that we all share the most basic and fundamental human need of care: being cared for and being able to care for others. This need incorporates the reciprocal capabilities of being understood and understanding, giving and receiving, being respected and respecting, and being recognized and recognizing. "Care" is elaborately described and detailed by Noddings and Martin. "Care" involves two relationships: the "one-caring" and the "cared-for." Care is the act of trying to apprehend and receive fully the reality of the other—for the purpose of acting for the other—to reduce pain, to fulfill needs, to actualize dreams: to act in their behalf. "When I am in this sort of caring relationship, when the other's reality becomes possibility for me, I care" (Noddings 1984, p.14). Noddings uses the term "engrossment" to represent this kind of deeply caring attention giving.

...by engrossment I mean an open, nonselective receptivity to the cared-for. Other writers have used the word "attention" to describe this characteristic... When I care, I really hear, see, or feel what the other tries to convey. The engrossment or attention may last only a few moments and it may or may not be repeated in future encounters, but it is full and essential in any caring encounter (Noddings 1992, pp. 15-16).

This interpretation of engrossment creates a constellation of engagement, empathy, and compassion that culminate in care. Based upon this kind of relationship, caring actions will be not be bound by fixed rules but guided by affection and regard. Caring relationships integrate the feelings and attitudes of giving, belonging, acceptance, love, and trust—radiated by the one-caring and perceived by the one-cared-for.

The primary aim is, rather, caring and being cared for in the human domain and full receptivity and engagement in the nonhuman world. A life meeting this aim—despite pain, deprivation, and trouble—will be filled at least occasionally with joy, wonder, engagement, and tenderness (Noddings 1984, p. 174).

Care, as described by Noddings (1984), is manifested in five domains of relationship, which she terms Five Centers of Care: Care for Self—one's physical well-being, spiritual harmony, and grace; Care for Intimate Others; Care of Associates, Distant Others, and Strangers, which develops a sense of shared living, mutual understanding, respect, and open-mindedness; Care for Non-human Life—plants, animals, the environment, emphasizing our interrelationship with Nature; and Care for Human-made Instruments and Ideas. Thus care extends into all aspects of life and living and being.

As we envision these Five Centers of Care, let us return to the concept of empathy, the projection of one's own consciousness into another's, and add the constellation of care. I not only project myself into another's reality, *I apprehend and receive* their reality as well. This addition encompasses the development of compassion, communion, understanding, and the entering of each other's Thou. Such a caring and imaginative projection would allow a simultaneous participation and interlocation of relationship, a multidimensional experiencing of another where feeling, perceiving, consciousness, and sensitivity could unite. The enabling and development of such relationships are, according to Lowenfeld (1982), the fundamental goals of education.

Sensitive relationships have been replaced by mass experiences...the television set becomes the center of the family...to remain sensitive to one's Self becomes almost a lost art; our end is to make the child more sensitive...to the world which surrounds him, out of such sensitivity, the child grows a deep understanding...to put ourselves in our neighbor's

place... self growth begins with identifying with one's work and then by putting oneself into the place of another and recognizing the needs of others (Lowenfeld 1982, pp.6, 7).

Here we find the essence of Lowenfeld's understanding of empathy: the imaginative projection of self into another, a projection involving a unity of thinking and feeling and perceiving deeply. I interpret Lowenfeld's "perceiving deeply" as becoming engrossed. Thus, I interpret his understanding of empathy as involving both imaginative projection and imaginative reception—as I imagine myself in my neighbor's place, I must simultaneously perceive my neighbor's situation so sensitively that I can feel that place within myself. I interpret his "sensitive relationships" as referring to what Noddings identifies as caring relationships. Lowenfeld emphasizes that the capability of empathy is essential for the most basic of interrelationships of cooperation and social-emotional growth to occur in the individual. A key component in the development of the individual's empathetic sensitivity is the development of self-sensitivity, self-awareness, and personal agency—all elements of Noddings' (1984) Self-Care. We need to be able to look within ourselves deeply and discover the meaningfulness of our actions relative to our self and to others.

If you have not been sensitized to your self so that what you do is meaningful to yourself, and if you regard what you do as something of a must, then please look into yourself and discover the meaningfulness to others of what you do, and you will be amply rewarded. If you haven't been sensitized to what surrounds you with regards to your sensibilities (that is, sensitive sensory experiences) so that you use your eyes not just for seeing but for observing and becoming emotionally involved in what you see, and your ears, not just for hearing but for listening and becoming emotionally involved in what you listen to...only if you become sensitive to, your self and your environment (which includes your neighbors) will you be rich in your life...this sensitivity consists of daily, hourly, constant inquiry into your own self and your relationship to your environment. And in this, I believe, the breaking down of generalizations into details will always help us. If we try to see little things, if we try to hear intricate differences, if we try to put our selves into our neighbor's place regardless of where they are and what status they have, then we come closer to this inquiry which results in sensitive relationships (Lowenfeld 1982, pp. 17, 18).

This quest for sensitive relationships with others, as Lowenfeld describes, is also a quest for the development of harmony and grace within the self described by Noddings (1984 and 1992). Such complete attainment may perhaps be only achieved by few, but all of us can journey towards enhanced sensitivity and harmony of self, thus bringing us towards enhanced relationships between others and our world. Our capacities for empathetic and sensitive relationships can be nurtured and developed just as our capacities for inner harmony and grace. Ann Diller (1996) concludes that the full realization of such a level of complete

engrossment is “a fine art rarely achieved by ordinary people. But the ethical point is rather that it demands serious effort and discipline. Part of what is entailed in this discipline of giving our concentrated attention to the present other is a concomitant respect for the singular character of each person and situation” (p. 91).

During my collaborative teaching of first graders at Gilford Elementary School, I interviewed each child in our class at the end of the school year. One of the questions that I posed asked the children to consider what it meant to be a friend. Responses included “someone that after you get hurt they help you and they play with you,” “when we start to know someone’s mind a lot we’re friends,” “someone who loves you and cares about you...we play with them and like um to take care of them when they get hurt.” “someone that cares about you and plays with you, helps you,” “a person who helps you, plays with you, and you write to and helps you learn together,” “[are] very nice to each other, help them when they’re lost or something, we trust our really good friends, we help them and stuff, we’re nice and we take care of each other,” “someone that cares and plays with you, helps people, let people play with your things, we love them.” We identified qualities of care as giving each other our attention, being kind to one another, showing our love to each other, sharing and playing, preventing hurt or harm, worrying for each other’s well-being, helping one another, and feeling special. Even at this young age, when their classroom was full of the love envisioned by B. Hooks and caring was practiced, modeled, and lived, the children were enabled to give and share attention, empathy, and deep concern for each other’s well-being within and beyond the classroom. Full engrossment may be a lifelong quest, but this quest begins with a first step.

One spring day this past year, while the classroom teacher, Wendy, and myself were giving a workshop, our first-grade children had a substitute teacher for two days in a row. During this time, an incident occurred on the playground during outdoor recess that the substitute teacher, Mrs. Nelson, wanted to bring to our attention. She wrote the following as a detailed account of this special incident:

As a substitute teacher in Wendy Roche’s classroom, I was very impressed with the caring and compassion of the children. When the kids returned from recess one afternoon, they were all upset by an incident on the playground. They proceeded to tell me of another first grader who had been teasing a classmate about her weight. Several children from Wendy’s class picked flowers and presented them to the girl. After sympathizing with them, the kids spontaneously chose to make cards for their friend, not a member of their own classroom. They each wrote a careful message, complete with a cheerful drawing. They wanted to let this classmate know that they did

**not care what she looked like, but that they valued her for who she is
(Emily Nelson, May 1998).**

Here we have a class of first graders expressing care for a slightly distant other and manifesting their ability to respect the singular character of this girl. Their actions were independent of any adult supervision. The children, on their own volition, gave this girl their most sensitive attention. The children were able to empathize with her, be concerned for her welfare, be upset by the hurtful treatment of this girl, and act upon these feelings in a manner designed not only to give care to the individual who had suffered but also to uphold their burgeoning ethic of care. The question arises, how did these children develop such sensitivity of caring and how can we cultivate such capabilities of caring for all our children? Perhaps we need to reconsider and examine traditional educational priorities.

Preparing a Palette: Reconstructing Educational Priorities

Martin and Noddings (1992 and 1984) admonish what they refer to as the traditional Liberal Education, which they describe as a set of proscribed disciplines now outmoded and antithetical to the goals of care and relationship. Martin argues that it is a narrowly conceived factory model while Noddings adds that it is an ideology of control. Children, they poignantly remind us, are our beloved children and not anonymous potential economic resources. An additional criticism they present, which I find particularly compelling, is that the mainstream traditional liberal curriculum is often devoid of meaningful content that students actually care about—especially concerning the deep existential angst present in our young people today, which fills them with questions and concerns not being addressed. They emphasize their concern that traditional curriculum devalues these cares and many of the perspectives, kinds of knowledge, skills, and capacities traditionally associated with women, racial and cultural minorities, the manual trades, crafts, and the arts. They point out that over half our population has been silenced and marginalized. Noddings and Martin at this juncture join a collective voice of emancipatory educators in their call to acknowledge and develop the fullest range of human capacities, to educate for diversity and multiplicity, for a common humanity, and to reconnect education with personal experience, meaning-making, care, and possibility. I share the words of a young high school student:

**Many students from minority groups are being trained only in
form and not in creative ways of thinking. This I believe, causes disenchantment**

among students...Black and Hispanic students have less of a chance at building strong relationships with any teachers because their appearance and behavior may be considered offensive to the middle class white teachers. These students show signs of what white teachers, and some teachers of color, consider disrespect and they do not get the nurturing relationships that develop respect and dedication. They are considered less intelligent, as can be seen in the proportion of Blacks and Hispanics in lower-level as opposed to upper-level classes. There is less of a teacher-student contact with "underachievers"...Public school teachers are no longer part of the same community as the majority of their students. The sad part of the situation is that many students believe that this type of teaching is what academic learning is all about. They have not had the opportunity to experience alternative ways of teaching and learning. From my experience in public school, it appears that many minority students will never be recognized as capable of analytical and critical thinking.

In the beginning of this article I spoke about my decision to leave my private school because of feeling isolated. After three months at a large urban public school, I found myself equally isolated—intellectually as well as racially... Most of the students I meet are kind, interesting people whom I like and respect. However, because the environment of the school is one in which ideas are not valued or fostered, I find it difficult to discuss issues with them, because my thoughtfulness has flourished, while others have been denied an opportunity to explore their intellectual development (ed. Woysner and Gelfond 1997, Imani Perry, pp. 153-5).

Noddings (1992) reminds us that it is impossible to reduce all teaching and learning into any one well-defined and replicable method. Instead, she advises that we leave behind such approaches to methodology and embark upon a journey of individual thinking, decision-making, and flexible adaptation to the diverse contextual needs of individual students within diverse environments while being reciprocally engaged in care. As such, educational propositions should be examined relative to the concerns of care: that which diminishes the light of care will be rejected, that which casts doubt upon its maintenance will be postponed, and that which enhances it will be embraced. Martin further advocates a concern I would like to emphasize: that our educational goals should include helping students to be able to address the existential heart of life—our passions, attitudes, connections, concerns, fears, dilemmas, responsibilities, sources of fulfillment, identity, spirituality...finding self and possibility. Through such explorations we develop our sense of self, our care for self, and our understandings of others. Discovering our imaginative, appreciative, and expressive skills and capacities keeps us in contact with the realities of our innermost selves and of specific others in contrast to an impersonal ethics and curriculum of abstracted, right-answer-oriented scientific problem-solving (Weston 1992) or of rote memorization and surface form.

Martin (1992) advocates curriculum that integrates thought and action, reason and emotion, education and life, and does not divorce individuals from their social, personal, and natural contexts. We need to promote schooling not as the road to higher economic status, but as a lifelong journey towards wisdom, fulfillment, and relationship. In order so to do, Noddings (1984 and 1992) suggests four key

components of implementation: modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. The teacher becomes a model care-giver. Each of our students must be able to experience directly being implicitly cared-for. We must simultaneously promote open-ended discussion and communication in a search for meaning, understanding, empathy, and mutual appreciation with fully engaged questioning and listening—with engrossment and care.

Compositional Viewpoints: The Perspective of Co-Being

Thich Nhat Hahn (1987) adds to these considerations by providing us with another lens with which to consider community, compassion, and relationship. He reminds us that not only do we live in a world of suffering and of wonder, but also both of these extremes are part of one another and part of each of us. So, too, each of us has the innate capacity of waking up to the world with great clarity and depth of vision, understanding, compassion, and love. He describes this capacity of understanding and loving as the essence of the Buddha nature within each of us or, as Lowenfeld and London might articulate, the essence of our true self—not the surface self running too fast to stop and breathe deeply, look deeply, listen deeply, and feel deeply. This is the self who can empathetically become one with the white birch in the forest, who can become one with the flowing water in the river, who was inside the suffering child, whose tear is a leaf falling from the great oak, mixing with the earth, and becoming... This true self is our innermost self, the self who can “be peace” and who, by being peace, can bring peace to the world.

Each of us is that person. Even as Noddings and Martin describe the innate need to care and be in relation, Thich Nhat Hahn expands relational awareness and engrossment to an opening of understanding, perceptual awareness, love, and beingness, which is inextricably interwoven and connected to the development of a community practicing loving with harmony and awareness.

When you understand, you cannot help but love. You cannot get angry.
To develop understanding, you have to practice looking at all living
beings with the eyes of compassion. When you understand, you love.
And when you love, you naturally act in a way that can relieve the suffering
of people (Thich Nhat Hahn 1987, pp. 14-15).

As the Buddha nature is awakened within, so, too, the Buddha nature without: Medicine circle within and without, I-Thou within and without. Love, compassion, and understanding are no longer abstracted concepts but actualized and realized being. We are all givers and receivers of care. We awaken to

the realization that we are all part of each other and take care of one another and need one another: people, the earth, and all living things. I entrust myself to the earth and the earth entrusts herself to me. We are bound together in love, compassion, and care. As we become awakened, we perceive the manifestation of harmony all around us. And as we become awakened, we become engaged and we bring harmony and awareness into the community (Thich Nhat Hahn 1987).

Practicing Buddhism, practicing meditation is for us to be serene and happy, understanding, and loving. In that way we work for peace and happiness of our family and of our society. If we look closely, the three gems are actually one (Thich Nhat Hahn 1987, p.20)

Awakening, according to Thich Nhat Hahn, further opens our fullest capacities of perception including not only our sensory impressions but also our ideas, concepts, and assumptions about reality. Such depth of perception guides us to be able to look into the essential nature of things and people and self, and not to be led by false assumptions and illusions. We are enabled to look beyond our conditioning and beyond our habituated norms of rationality, prejudices, and fears. In order to do so, we need to experience direct encounters and to become one with what we want to understand. This leads to what Thich Nhat Hahn terms dependent co-arising: becoming aware of our mutual interrelationship of well-being and connectedness. My well-being depends on your well-being depends upon mine...I am responsible for you and you are responsible for me and we each are responsible for our self in order to be able to take care of you, me, each other, others. However, I must be able to take care of myself—my true self. Our happiness and well-being are interrelated parts of a whole tapestry of well-being, awareness, and love. This conceptualization of co-being and care for our innermost self parallels and elaborates upon Noddings' five centers of care while emphasizing the internal locus of care and motivation—our true self, from which all will emanate when awakened (and cared for).

We are able to understand, become one, take hold of one another, and connect, no longer perceiving ourselves in the dualistic relationship of self and other but instead as one made from many in the understanding of our connectedness. As such, we no longer stand outside or apart from something or someone for the purpose of contemplation or understanding but are able to become one without distinction—as Thich Nhat Hahn describes becoming one with the river pirate and the young girl who has been raped, or the brother who has angered him, or the sunflower in the field being mown...this perception

of non-duality is the source of compassion and forgiveness. This is the source of oneness and the realization that even knowledge can become an obstacle to understanding. Understanding is the water flowing over the rock penetrating layers and layers of hardness, penetrating to our Buddha natures (Thich Nhat Hahn 1987). Herrigel (1953) provides an interesting description of being in a state of dependent co-arising with nature. Due to the time and location of his writing, I have taken the liberty of amending his use of gender exclusive language.

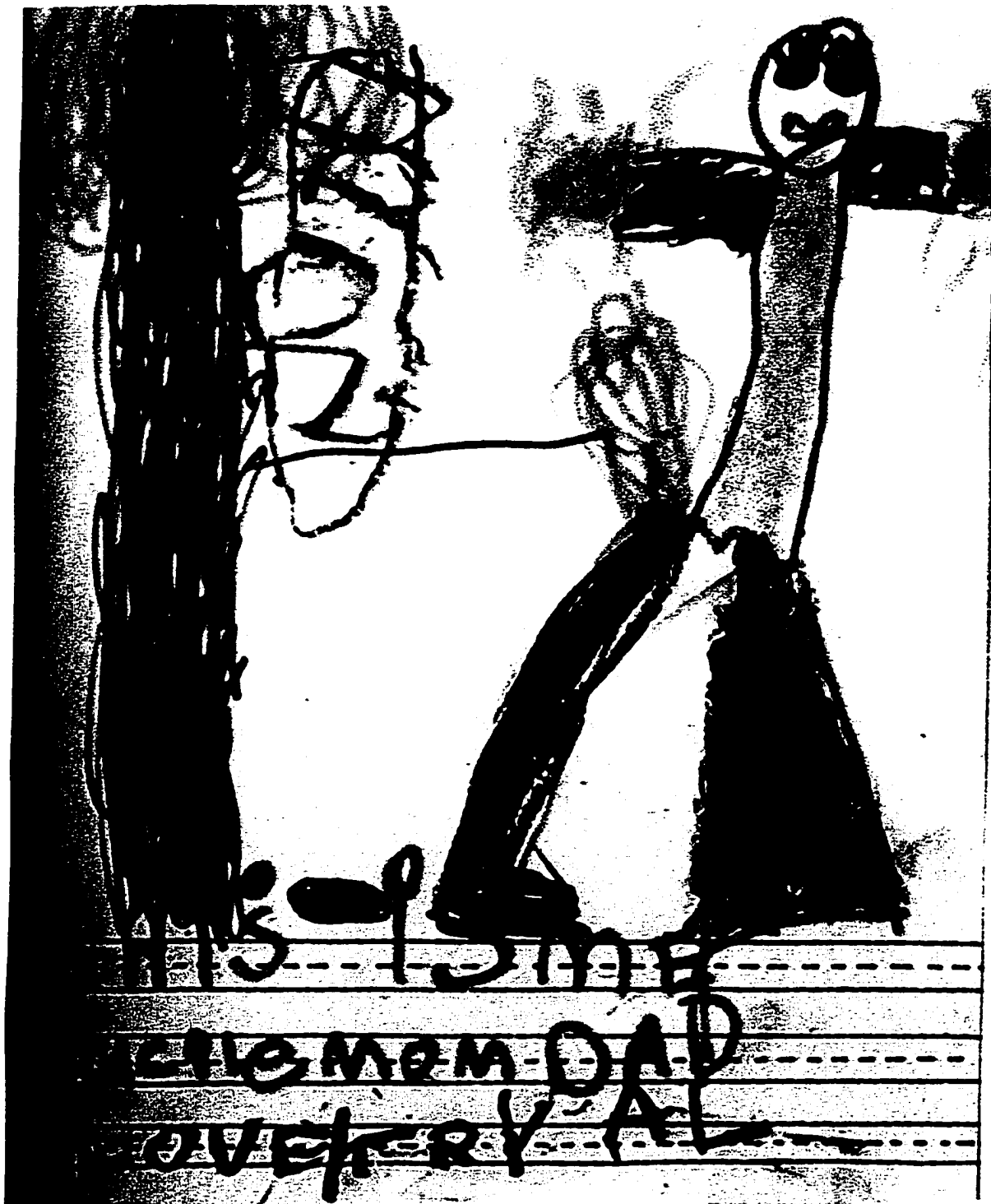
[Human beings are]...thinking reed[s] but [their] great works are done when [they are] not calculating and thinking. "Childlikeness" has to be restored with long years of training in the art of self-forgetfulness. When this is attained [we think] yet [we do] not think. [We think] like the showers coming down from the sky; [we think] like the waves rolling on the ocean; [we think] like the stars illuminating the nightly heavens; [we think] like the green foliage shooting forth in the relaxing spring breeze. Indeed, [we are] the showers, the ocean, the stars, the foliage...when [an individual] reaches this stage of "spiritual" development, [this individual] is a Zen artist of life (Herrigel 1953. p.vii).

His emphasis on the restoration of childlikeness resonated a strong chord within me. I am struck by how much we can learn from children and how much of children's capabilities of creativity, spirituality, and empathy are slowly yet steadily eroded through years of systemic education and enculturation. I am reminded of Maggie, chronologically the youngest first grader in our class. Every time she made a drawing of a tree, a house, an animal, the sunshine, flowers, feelings, butterflies—whatever other the subject may have been—the other became, as the image emerged and developed, simultaneously Maggie (see samples).

I initially interpreted this as a typical developmental manifestation of egocentricity. When Maggie told a story, she became the characters and the emotions in the story. Her entire body and demeanor would change during these transformations. When sharing her artwork and telling about her images, another form of storytelling, this transformation would again take place. After the telling, Maggie would give a title to every image: "The Wind Lifting the Air," "The Purple Cloud of Laughing," "The Rain Weeps Love My Mother Sings To Me," and "The Sunshine Is God's Angel Giving Love to All the Plants and the Animals and the Sky and All of Us." Upon prolonged reflection, and as a consequence of my relationship with Maggie throughout the course of the year, I am drawn towards a different speculation: perhaps Maggie's drawings reflected her innate capacity to project empathetically into otherness and perceive her world nondualistically.



4. Tree by Maggy - October



5. This is me by Maggy
- October

Patrick Murphy, in his essay, "Voicing Another Nature," describes the traditional western, male, positivistic attitude as one of "total alienation from the rest of nature" (Eds. Hohne and Wussow 1994, p. 63). He posits a different view of relationship influenced by feminist epistemology and Native American cosmology.

What if instead of alienation we posit relation as the primary mode of human-human, human-nature, interaction, without conflating differences, particularity, and other specifics? What if we worked from a concept of relational difference and *anotherness* rather than otherness? (Murphy, Eds. Hohne and Wussow, 1994, p.63)

The consideration of "anotherness" develops a heterarchical rather than a hierarchical sense of difference. We become part of a medicine circle rather than a staircase, part of an ecological model of otherness and relation that relies upon the interanimation of human development. Diller (1992) also suggests that when we consider plurality in the context of caring and empathetically sensitive relationships, we move from mere co-existing to co-operation, co-exploring, and co-enjoyment. I further posit co-being begins.

Bakhtin also differentiates between relational and alienational otherness in his essay, "Philosophy of the Act." Murphy points out Bakhtin's assertion that "in actuality a person exists in the forms of I and another...I for myself, the other for me, and I for another" (Bakhtin quoted by Murphy 1994, Eds. Hohne and Wussow, pp. 63-4). Murphy shares with us how Bakhtin chooses the Russian word "drugoi," which means another, other person, rather than the word "chuzoi," which means stranger, alien, and other. Thus, Murphy invites us to consider that Bakhtin's another is "a friendly other, and a living factor in the I's journey toward self-definition" (Murphy 1994, Eds. Hohne and Wussow, p. 80). The self, he claims, echoing Vygotsky and Wertsch, can not emerge in isolation from others and develops in response to others.

I achieve self consciousness, I become myself, only by revealing myself to another; through another, and with another's help. The most important acts, constitutive of self-consciousness, are determined by their relation to another consciousness (a "thou"). Cutting oneself off, isolating oneself, closing oneself, those are the basic reasons for loss of self...I cannot do without the other; I cannot become myself without the other; I must find myself in the other, finding the other in me (in mutual reflection and perception). (Bakhtin, "The Dialogic Principle," p.96, quoted by Heikinen, Eds. Hohne and Wussow, pp. 116-17).

Thich Nhat Hahn emphasizes that this relationship of I and Thou, of interconnected anotherness,

is developed from love and understanding, which become actualized and realized through direct practice. Our two most fundamental promises are to develop our compassion and to develop our understanding in order to love and protect life and to be able to live in a world community of harmony and peace. We begin by being peace. And to whom do we make this promise? Our innermost self. Breathing peace. Breathing relationship. Thich Nhat Hahn, Lowenfeld, Bakhtin, and Noddings and Martin certainly come from diverse historical and cultural locations. Yet they all identify interrelational and reciprocal empathy, the interconnectedness of human beings, and the development of our inner self as being fundamentally constitutive of our well-being and our co-being. Well-being, awareness, and love return us to the constellation of engagement, empathy, and care. We develop the Sangha: “the community that lives in harmony and awareness” (Thich Nhat Hahn 1987, p.26) from this constellation.

The Studio: Care in Our Classrooms

Can we look at education through the eyes of awakened understanding and the opportunity to develop the Sangha? This means looking beyond ideologies and discovering each individual student and the constellation of their situation, awakening ourselves to our students’ realities and well-being—physical, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive—placing ourselves empathetically inside their awareness, and asking how our teaching can bring them to their fullest well-being, will relieve and prevent as much suffering as possible, and bring as much awakening and harmony and love to these children. Can we also become one with the other members of our learning community, for the classroom is a complex community of interbeingness, all of whom our understanding must touch? When this happens, in Thich Nhat Hahn’s words, the classroom becomes a Sangha; in Greene’s words, the classroom becomes a meeting ground for awakening; in Noddings and Martin’s words, the classroom becomes a caring home; and in the lexicon of the Lakota, a medicine circle.

Three of my first graders, Jeff, Maggie, and Jesse, were being pulled out of our classroom for remedial reading. After two months of pull out, they all stubbornly refused to read during this time, and the reading specialist was reporting that they were having major problems with reading. This information was confusing to Wendy who, as their classroom teacher, observed them engaged with reading the very same books to many of their classmates in our classroom. So she asked the children what was happening.

Their answer was simple. “We don’t like Mrs.—’s room. We want to stay in our room! Our class is a magic place!” The word “magic” immediately conjures associations of transformation, which could be considered as the essence of learning and of creativity. “Magic” further implies, in this context, something very special. These children believed their classroom to be a very special place. I interpret their words to mean that this specialness includes their sense of self within this place. They felt that they belonged, were believed in, were capable, and were cherished in this magic place. Their classroom had become their care community.

I want to argue that we need to fortify the aesthetic boundaries that define teaching. We need to re-create safe places, even in schools, where teachers can concentrate, can attend to their experience of children and of the world, we need to create community spaces where the forms that express that experience are shared. The process of creating these spaces will be as important as the spaces themselves...(Grumet 1988, p.90).

These children had such a space in their classroom (for further discussion of classroom space see chapter 7). Their classroom had been transformed into a space of mutual sustainment where the expression of vulnerable thoughts and feelings regarding experience could be articulated and shared with self and others without fear of rejection or humiliation. A studio had been formed that offered the opportunities of a creative dialectic in an ongoing dialogue of many languages and voices—including that of silence. The next step, as Grumet advocates, is to keep open the door of that studio and expand.

I believe in an education of care and compassion. I know the application of these ideals is possible for I have experienced them. I had the opportunity many years ago to work as an art director-teacher in a Montessori Summer Arts Program called Summer Center in Wellfleet, MA. We met five days a week with thirty children aged four–eight years old from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. We were a team of four: I, the visual arts specialist, Paul, the musician, Betty, the directress and woman of all specialties, and Joan, our visiting artist and teaching assistant. The Center revolved around the arts: visual art, music, drama, puppetry, movement, storytelling, play, cooking, and reading. The day provided a range of learning centers with the structure of a care circle in the morning, activities, snack, activities, circle before lunch, lunch, quiet time, and continued activities. Children worked in groups or individually as they needed at self-selected activities. The center was both indoors and outdoors. We had a rabbit, a dog, a cat, and hamsters to take care of. We had a garden and wonderful woods in which to take nature walks. The children took turns in

the kitchen preparing our daily snacks. We played games, but none were competitive.

As I reflect back to that time, our primary goal was care and community. Our “formal” curriculum was the arts. Our children came from multicultural backgrounds. Half of the children were from Boston and New York City, and half were local. We had many lenses of looking and communicating. Some children were from very affluent families, others from extremely poor. We cherished each other’s uniqueness and specialness. Many manifested un-caring behaviors during their first week of Summer Center. They were hostile towards other children. They were unable to share, competitive, thorny, ill-mannered, attention-starved, seemingly bored, un-self-directed, and insecure. Our flexible informal curriculum of love, home, discovery, and personalized creativity consistently experienced soon had a marked effect. The children learned a great deal about themselves, each other, relationships of care and affection, nurturing, responsibility, nature, and being artists. Their hostile and insecure dark cloud began to lift and shine with growing confidence, caring for others, caring for teachers—manifested through acts of generosity, giving, kindness, and motivation. I will also add that the staff was mutually caring of one another and that we had weekly discussion sessions regarding the planning of opportunities and regarding the needs of individual children. We knew and cared for each child deeply and they knew this, too. I feel particularly blessed to have had this experience for two summers and still to have these teachers as my friends. Summer Center is now a year-round pre-school-home. I know that many of my core beliefs about caring grew in this home environment surrounded by inspired and loving teachers and learners. As a teacher, and as a person, I felt cherished by my students and my colleagues. I felt part of a very connected and caring community.

In contrast, I offer my experience as a teaching assistant for the art department of an urban high school. This was a huge, inner-city, poverty-area school. The building was seven stories of cement brick and locked doors. Police guarded the halls. Students were checked for weapons. The students came from all areas of the city since this was a magnet E.S.L. school. Announcements came in approximately ten languages. During the time I was there, the main influx of students from immigrant families were Haitian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese. The general environment could well be described as cold, sterile, apathetic, fragmented, angry, and tired.

Departments seemed isolated from one another. Within the art department there were four teachers

whose rooms were located at very distant locations throughout the building. The students, to my eyes, were very big, tough, cold, apathetic, completely bored, disrespectful of teachers and adults in general, and uncommunicative. Apathy was the most abundant emotion. The underlying educational goal was to keep out of trouble. I worked with an Introduction to Art class. The teacher had given up on three-quarters of the class who sat around the room and listened to walkmans. I took on the challenge of involving these students. I spent a great deal of time at first just talking and listening to them talk about themselves, their ideas, and their frustrations with this class and their lives. We needed to know one another. They needed to gain confidence in themselves and with me. These students were starved for attention, sincere care, and someone to believe in them—in their individual uniqueness and potential. These concerns became my primary goals. They needed to open their creative energy and to develop technical skills needed for developing and expressing their ideas. Throughout the spring we constantly engaged in discussion, regarding the development of their ideas, their images, and using images to communicate issues. Our discussions included visual problem-solving, sharing feelings, sharing responses, and of course, sharing their artwork. We were successful, I believe, for two main reasons, both of which are advocated by Martin and Noddings: First, we developed caring relationships with one another—a micro care-community. Second, art projects integrated thematically into the students' life experiences and concerns. For example, we began skill building with the use of expressive line, marks, colors, and shapes to convey emotions and interpretations of music. This led to the analysis of MTV music commercials and the design of posters interpreting personally selected music. These posters led to the design of community posters conveying concerns for neighborhood welfare and seeing the neighborhood from a sidewalk point of view. Two areas of dominant concern that arose were drug abuse and environmental abuse. Our last project together revolved around the theme of self-portraits: stereotypes versus who I am. These projects invited students to become self-motivated due to relevancy of themes and concerns. The presentation of information and technical skills sequentially built upon the variety of capabilities of each individual. Skill development plus relevancy became engagement.

My experience is amplified in the work of Tim Rollins. Rollins is an artist/teacher who works with high-school-aged students in the Hunts Point section of South Bronx, New York. He has developed

an independent art workshop called K.O.S.: Kids of Survival. Within this neighborhood arts center, Rollins has been able to establish and implement, since 1982, The Art and Knowledge Workshop, which has become a dynamic nonprofit organization. This workshop provides the neighborhood youth with the opportunity to explore collaboratively their culture and their world and to explore themselves and one another using the language of art. These explorations have led to their ability to reclaim their agency, their voice, and their sense of inquiry and envisionment.

...Rollins and K.O.S. have collaborated to explore, through the study of works of literary distinction and through artmaking, many of the complex social, political, and ideological factors which shape their daily lives in the South Bronx. In an early writing, Rollins has spoken about the kinds of issues and "matters" with which he and K.O.S. wrestle in their workshop activity: to learn what actually interests them; to represent themselves directly and sincerely; and to confront the political and economic factors which determine their lives....students mutually engage in a series of investigations whose focus is to critically examine and scrutinize forms of contemporary culture as part of the broader task of constructing the material realities of a more just and democratic life (Paley 1995, pp. 22, 32).

I believe that Rollins exemplifies a teacher who models both caring and artistry. Due to the nurturance and dedication of Rollins, and the collective community of participating young people, K.O.S. has become a Sangha/meeting ground for the youth whom he teaches. One of his stated goals is to turn student "stigma" into pride and confidence; to turn apathy into action, enthusiasm, and hope; and to turn alienation into connection. He provides and cultivates a space where everyone is welcome and given a sense of belonging, contributing, and connection. He utilizes dialogue, research, sequential skill building, and collaborative art-making as pathways to I-Thou relationships and meeting grounds.

Genuine collaboration is a coming together of people to create something that Would not have been possible to make alone. The simplest art partnerships join the work of two or more people together to form a single creation. A more elaborate structure for collaboration can be seen in the performing arts, where a group of individuals performs a work created by a dominant author or maestro. But isn't more than a combined effort required? A dialogue, a communication, a connection that transforms the participants can occur. Deep collaboration compels us to see ourselves through others. Truly collaborative works of art are commitments in time and space, cause and effect at once, even a form of love (Rollins quoted by Paley 1997, p. 55).

My work with urban students was a tiny note of possibility. Rollins' work represents multiple orchestrations and symphonies.

I offer one additional example of care and community being developed in a school classroom. I teach a class to elementary education majors every semester at Plymouth State College. This class is their introduction to the visual arts, their personal creativity, and the role the visual arts can play in education. Most of my students are terrified, withdrawn, resistant, and closed-minded about art. They are convinced of

their personal inability to make art. I am their worst fear—an artist disguised as a teacher. Nothing will occur in this class until I can nurture a community that invites compassion, care, security, trust, discovery, play, confidence, individuality, imagination, and the openness to share ideas and feelings without the fear of being hurt or embarrassed, of making a mistake, or of failing.

The class begins with large sheets of paper—the penultimate terror for one who is convinced he or she can not draw—but a magnificent material to explore if you are a three-year-old and invited to discover its amazing manipulative qualities. This we do: crumpling, tearing, ripping, folding, squeezing, pleating, piercing, smelling, listening, waving, floating, curling...until there are no longer any flat sheets of white paper—for they have become transformed into sculptural forms that invite our senses and our imaginations to suspend reality, engage in make-believe, and respond in metaphor. Thus we share waterfalls, landscapes of cracked deserts and caverns and mountains, supergalactic rollercoasters, dinosaur fossils, piles of rose petals, glaciers... We then discuss emotions, naming them and describing our physical responses to states of intense emotion, and try to imagine being in that emotion... Then we discuss the possibility of interpreting an intense emotional state we have experienced as a white paper sculpture and connecting the qualities of the paper manipulations to the qualities of emotion. We also agree that we can be inspired from each other's work, that there is no right or wrong, and that anything can happen. The sculptures emerge almost miraculously to the surprise of their creators and they are compellingly interesting and invite our sharing and telling and interpreting. Thus we culminate our journey by doing just this. Now something even more wonderful occurs, which still evokes awe for me: the telling and sharing and interpreting emanate out from the deepest inner self and heart—this box is the world around me that I keep tightly closed and stay safe inside but these little windows let the light in and these little scraps inside and coming through the windows are my mind filling up with new things since I decided to go back to school and there are places for more windows; this is when I watch my little boy sleep and I love him so much I feel all this love radiating out all over me and I want to cover him up in it and protect him so he won't get hurt like me; this is my confusion and feeling like I don't know what to do; this is when I float and let go and feel real peaceful and think about my boyfriend and feel okay about myself. We were strangers two hours ago and now we are sharing from our innermost hearts and discovering the bonds of connection. Not only have we created together but we have shared deep parts of our lives with one another as well and we are becoming a community filled with the sprouting seeds of compassion, imagination, and awareness.

Is it possible to have a borderline care community? I have sought a specific example that would represent a middle ground but instead came up with descriptors of characteristics and emotional responses regarding the many teachers and classrooms that I have observed, participated in as a student, and have had shared with me by students whom I teach and advise. Perhaps this is the most dangerous climate in a philosophical sense, since the teachers in these situations consider themselves very caring teachers and have the best of intentions, yet remain unaware of the actual ongoing subversion of care and community and the silencing of Thou dialogues. Environmental descriptors include actual physical presence and emotive presence—the body language so to speak of the environment (and we know from such studies as “One Thousand Hours” that even in the most depressed of physical and economic locations an environment can be transformed from barren and bleak to warm and inviting). Such descriptors include cold, sterile, boring, fearful, silent, uncomfortable—even when initially seeming quite inviting to the eye...Emotional responses include feelings such as being afraid to answer, being afraid of humiliation, being afraid of having the wrong answer, being afraid of being bad, being afraid to be different, being afraid of not belonging, having no friends, being alone, being neglected by the teacher—all the same kids always get attention and do well—feeling stupid and incompetent, being bored, feeling frustrated, feeling that nobody really listens...How often do I still see special education students theoretically included yet seated apart and isolated from the rest of the class? How often is excellence in school still understood as the demonstration by all students (no matter how diverse they may be racially, ethnically, economically, in terms of gender, in terms of learning styles, needs, and multiplicity of intelligences) of academic achievement relative to national norms and standards in the dominantly valued set of college preparatory courses and academic disciplines? When our children do not achieve satisfactorily in these areas, are not they deemed unsuccessful, and less than capable, and even labeled as failures?

...just as an excellent education must provide for the diversity of human talents, so it must provide for those concerns and responsibilities common to most of us [citizenship, homemaking, parenting, neighboring, friendship, fulfillment.]...to be excellent such a system must be relatively free of injustices in the form of omission of perspectives that are important to substantive numbers of people...Now if we had a system that met the 2 conditions so far identified...would that system necessarily be excellent? Suppose someone raises this kind of concern: Students in this system...are engaged in significant common explorations and most seem to be getting rigorous training in their areas of special interest. But most of them seem to be miserable. shouldn't we want them to be happy in what they are doing?...the quality of present educational experience is an important aspect of excellence...How children feel—whether they are happy, engaged, realistically confident, eager for experience—matters...if we are succeeding in our efforts to establish an excellent quality of present experience, people—

teachers, students, administrators, parents—should enjoy being in school; there should be fewer incidents of violence and nastiness; there should be more acts of kindness, more expressions of concern for others; more open conversation, and fewer acts of control on the part of adults (Noddings 1992, pp. 2,3, 4; (see Noddings, “Excellence As a Guide to Educational Conversation” PES Yearbook 1992 for further discussion).

No account of school disappointment could, for me, be more profound than the one I heard in a personal conversation with a teaching colleague. He was sharing a story concerning a recent encounter with a close childhood friend he had not seen for many years. His friend has been homeschooling her three children for the past ten years. He asked her to explain why she had decided to take this educational path with her children. She shared with him a story of her six-year-old son going to first grade. Over the course of the fall semester she observed him gradually becoming more and more listless, anxious, and uncharacteristically quiet concerning school. One day he came home quietly crying. “No one loves me at school.” The unraveling of this story ended up in his being homeschooled and so, too, his two siblings. But what would have happened if he had felt loved at school? These children had the blessing of sensitive and caring parents capable of providing homeschooling. We need to consider the growing numbers of children for whom their family home is not a safe or caring place or for whom alternative schooling is impossible. When school is a loving place where we find our inner selves being cared for and where we enter into caring relationships with others, we can share our innermost selves and come to deep understandings of one another. We can believe in ourselves and in others.

According to legend, little mouse was journeying to the sacred mountains which she had seen in a vision. The other mice thought she was crazy to go on such a quest, leaving security and the known world behind. The journey would require great courage and belief. During this journey, little mouse came upon two extraordinary beings who moved her heart. Little mouse first came upon a dying buffalo. She gave her eye to the wounded buffalo so that he could be healed. Then little Mouse came upon a great Wolf who had lost her sense of Self. Mouse then gave her remaining eye to the wolf who had lost herself so that he could be healed and continue to guide others to the Sacred Mountains. Finally, at the top of the Sacred Mountain, at the edge of the Sacred Lake little Mouse, now blind, listened to her heart beating in fear. She heard the voice of a friend telling her to trust and to leap as high as she could into the sky and not be afraid... And so Mouse trusted her friend, closed her eyes tightly and leaped into the sky. She was swept upward into the clouds by the wind and as she opened her eyes, she discovered that not only could she see, but that she had become a soaring eagle flying high above the Sacred Mountains... (Traditional Lakota Legend greatly condensed and put into this form by Cynthia Vascak).

I share this legend with my students as a parable of care. As teachers, we are all jumping mouse.

As students we are all jumping mouse. So, too, we are the wounded buffalo and the wolf that lost her sense of self. We can be the friend and the soaring eagle. To do so and be so, we need to be able to listen to our hearts, be guided by our hearts, and listen to the hearts of others. How can we enhance such sensitive and empathetic listening? I firmly believe that the sharing and integrating of diverse expressive forms and multimodal symbol systems enables the fullest range and depth of communication, inquiry, and engaged responding. We can practice and engage in caring. Actively caring and acting upon care relationships increases our capacities to care and be cared for. We then celebrate and confirm one another—finding and affirming the caring self in each individual, developing our mutual trust, sensitivity, empathy, acceptance, and care. We will have participated in modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. We will have invited the spiral constellation into our classroom.

The Gallery: Care and Criticism

This invitation, however, is too rarely shouted out loud and often remains submerged within public school cultures. Clearly articulating “care” as a fundamental educational goal is often perceived as a sign of becoming intellectually soft and emotionally handicapped. Due to the prevalence of a culturally pervasive habituated consciousness, developed throughout our Western patriarchal society, the concepts of “care” and “compassion” have been traditionally relegated to the domain of women, labeled under the classification of emotions, and regarded as separate and inferior to the rational mind. Furthermore, women’s acknowledgement of care and compassion as moral values and as key components of moral decision-making has been traditionally regarded as representing women’s inferior level of moral reasoning and development, again subordinate to purely principled, logical, and context-free reasoning (Gilligan 1977, p. 79). I remind us of these assumptions because the concepts of care and compassion have such culturally loaded connotations of sentimentality, romanticized nurturing, permissiveness, and overly protective mothering. All of these qualities are distinctly separated from generally held understandings of knowing, learning, and critical thinking. Even when I discuss my research with my colleagues and friends, I find that if I refer to my concern for compassionate community, their response is usually, “how nice,” accompanied by a swift conversational turn. If instead, I refer to critical community, I am asked to elaborate. Ironically, the term “care” implies a lack of intellectual seriousness and maudlin emotionality,

while the term “critical” sends a message of intellectual rigor.

When I suggest that a morally defensible mission of education necessarily focuses on matters of human caring, people sometimes agree but fear the loss of an intellectual mission for the schools. There are at least two responses to this fear. First, anyone who supposes that the current drive for uniformity in standards, curriculum, and testing represents an intellectual agenda needs to reflect on that matter. Indeed, many thoughtful educators, insist that such moves are anti-intellectual, discouraging critical thinking, creativity, and novelty. Further, in their emphasis on equality, they may lead to grosser levels of mediocrity. Second, and more important from the perspective adopted here, a curriculum centered on the themes of care can be as richly intellectual as we and our students want to make it. Those of us advocating genuine reform—better, transformation—will surely be accused of anti-intellectualism, just as John Dewey was in the middle of this century. But the accusation is false and we should have the courage to face it down (Martin, Ed. Clinchy, 1997, p.32).

Since a full discussion of knowledge and emotion values would necessitate another dissertation, I will limit myself to the reiteration that this dissertation is being developed from the arena of postmodern feminist epistemology, which emphasizes the interrelationships of knowing and feeling and which presents a profound challenge to traditional Western empiricist concepts of knowledge.

One of the central tenets of feminist critical pedagogy has been the insistence on not engaging the mind/body split. This is one of the underlying beliefs that has made Women’s Studies a subversive location in the academy...those of us who have been intimately engaged as students or teachers with feminist thinking have always recognized the legitimacy of a pedagogy that dares subvert the mind/body split and allow us to be whole in the classroom, and as a consequence, wholehearted...when eros is present in the classroom setting, then love is bound to flourish (hooks 1994, pp.197-8).

Critical concerns and the concerns of care are often considered as conflicting and contradictory.

Learning inherently involves our critical capacities and the development of competencies and teaching inherently involves the pedagogical task of providing educational criticism (Diller 1993). Martin reminds us, however, that “caring in every domain implies competence. When we care, we accept the responsibility to work continuously on our competence so that the recipient of our care—person, animal, object, or idea—is enhanced. There is nothing mushy about caring. It is the strong, resilient backbone of human life” (Martin, Ed. Clinchy, 1997, p. 36). Care and criticism can go together hand in glove. How can this be? Returning to my source of Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (fifth edition), I encountered the following definitions:

Critic: Originally from the Greek—able to discuss. The meaning then becomes to discern and to judge. One who expresses a reasoned opinion on any matter involving a judgement of its value, truth, or righteousness, or an appreciation of its beauty or technique.

Critical: Inclined to criticize, especially unfavorable. Exercising careful judgement.
Pertaining to a turning point. Attended with risk. A transition point.
Criticism: The act of criticizing—especially unfavorably. Censure. The art of judging
with knowledge and propriety the beauties and faults of works of Art.

(Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1947, p.241).

As I study these definitions, I am reminded of many of my personal undergraduate studio classes and the writing of Madelaine Grumet (1993) as she describes Judy Chicago's account of her growth as a leading contemporary artist. I was struck by Chicago's description of her retreat into her studio as if into a womb or sanctuary apart from any community studio as well as from public eye. She and I share a similarity of age and the attending of art school during a similar period of time. My most vivid memories of my studio classes are rooted in my feelings of response to the intensely competitive, aggressive, and critical atmosphere. Studios and critical critique sessions were hostile, negative, and threatening. Drawings would be pinned to the critique wall and progressively shredded by the instructor. We certainly learned what was wrong with our respective images and also learned to internalize this harsh form of criticism in what I refer to as non-constructive and even abusive self-criticism. As a result, many of us, both male and female, did withdraw into our personal studio spaces and plagued ourselves with self-doubt. What could have become a dynamic community studio of mutual creativity and envisionment remained a silent space where we acquired technical skills and surreptitiously beheld each other's work when class was not in session. This may seem too long ago and far too subjective to be of relevance, yet I now teach studio art at the university level and I still find myself, at the beginning of every semester, encountering students who visibly recoil and cringe at the words critique or critical discussion and who flagellate themselves with I can't's and negative self-criticism. One such student was so opposed to the very word "critique" based upon personal experiences of censure and rigid judgement that we, as a class community, decided to use alternative terminologies such as progress exhibitions, feedback sessions, and reflective discussion, while emphasizing our common goal of sharing ideas and learning from one another. Only then could we begin crossing the boundaries of his past experience of perceived attack and enter a new territory of safe public space.

Ann Diller (1993) poignantly describes students' perception of what she terms as "attack criticism" and the students' subsequent reinforcement of self-doubts, discouraged risk-taking, and

withdrawal from participation. Under these conditions, Diller argues, criticism becomes miseducative. She presents William Glasser's "Never Criticise" position and his belief in the overriding destructive nature of criticism. However, his point is based upon a particular form of criticism implemented within particular contexts—just as my student's responses developed from individually particular experiences. My student's attitude and his responses were able to change within a different context and understanding of criticism—a context of mutual care and respect for each other as individuals and an understanding of criticism as a form of inquiry and dialogue, a context where criticism and care were not antithetical to one another but were woven together.

If we truly love our children we don't spoil them or overindulge them;
rather we expect, demand, require, and teach adherence to certain standards
of behavior for the sake of both the child and the community (Diller 1993, p.1).

Within the compassionate community, standards of behavior include respect for each other as individuals and respect for each other's ideas and diversity of capabilities. We further have a goal of developing care for one's self—one's innermost self—and this care includes the development of confidence, a sense of capability, and self-respect (Noddings 1984 and Lowenfeld 1958). Since this is also an educational community, we seek to develop each of our students' capabilities, skills, and understandings to their fullest capacity. Educational criticism rather than care has been traditionally considered a key pedagogical tool for the achievement of these last three goals.

What do we mean by educational criticism? My personal experiential understanding of educational criticism is interwoven with my learner memories. Criticism was for my own good. Criticism would make me stronger, somehow achieve more, and even be inspirational. Yet, in my reality, criticism most often took the direction of identifying my deficiencies, identifying what I did not understand, and ascertaining what I had done wrong. My faults seemed amplified. My experience repeats the experience of my student without the sense of attack—just defeat. Applebaum (1996) provides an extensive discussion of educational criticism. He proposes that there are two fundamental aspects of educational criticism that have become conflated and cloud our understanding of criticism. According to Applebaum, criticism has traditionally served to measure student performance and behavior against established standards and norms. He refers to

associations of criticism that involve “challenging, calling into question, posing contrary evidence, developing counter examples, and detecting contradiction and other forms of inconsistency and inadequacy in the students they are nurturing” (Applebaum discussing Diller and Morgan 1994, p.2). Again, I hear an implied emphasis on deficiencies rather than upon sufficiencies, competencies, or even excellencies. Thus, the first aspect of educational criticism is pointing out inadequacies relative to the selected standards and norms.

The second aspect of educational criticism, according to Applebaum is the manner in which criticism is transmitted to the student. This transmission can convey a range of messages from respect to disrespect in addition to conveying evaluation. Here lies the psychological or emotional impact of criticism and its potential to provide positive support and challenge to the student or to diminish the student’s sense of capability and self. I believe that this is a key consideration for teachers as givers and modelers of care and who aspire to develop care communities in their classrooms. I believe that, even if theoretically applied as objectively as possible, criticism is never neutral and it is always accompanied by overt or covert continuum of messages conveying care, support, and relationship or the opposite. Noddings (1984) addresses these concerns in her discussion of confirmation and evaluation. She warns against the objectification of students as a form of diminishing care and relationship and as being antithetical to the values of care. During her discussion of evaluation practices she states:

So many practices embedded in the masculine curriculum masquerade as essential to the maintenance of standards. I suggest that they accomplish quite a different purpose: the systematic dehumanization of both female and male children through the loss of the feminine (Noddings 1984, p. 192).

When we evaluate our students’ work, we need to be able to remain in caring relation with each individual student. The teacher, as one-caring, is concerned with the student as an individual and cherished subject. Therefore, during evaluation, the teacher is concerned for the holistic well-being and holistic growth and development of the student in addition to specific performances or demonstrations of competencies and understandings.

When we attribute the best possible motive consonant with reality to the Cared-for, we confirm him; that is we reveal to him an attainable image of himself that is lovelier than that manifested in his present acts. In an important sense, we embrace him as one with us in devotion to caring. In education, what we reveal to the student about himself as an ethical and intellectual being has the power to nurture the ethical ideal or to destroy it (Noddings 1984, p.193).

Ironically, Noddings points out that formal grading and evaluation are the means of informing others about a student's "progress" relative to normative standards. How can uniform standards be applied to each individual and be able to address and support each individual's needs, capacities, learning styles, and interests? How can this be done in a manner that will nurture and challenge the individual learner's ongoing holistic growth and development, his or her ethical and intellectual growth and development, and maintain caring relations? "This is a dilemma that goes to the heart of teaching" (Noddings 1984, p. 195). We need to be able to provide confirmation to our students as individuals. Confirmation points the student towards his or her "best possible self" (Noddings 1984, p. 196) and maintains the I-Thou relationship of care.

I propose that we embrace a form of criticism that returns to earlier concepts of discussion, reasoning, and the art of making judgements with knowledge and care. Such criticism would then entail the consideration of and the respect for each individual learner's whole self: one's needs, capacities, and concerns. Judgement within this context would not be an evaluation of right or wrong, correct or incorrect, good or bad, but an assessment of learning needs and the consideration of future challenges, while a diversity of achievements and learning experiences are being shared and constructed. Instead of separating the qualities of care and of criticism, which further implies a continued bifurcation of emotion and knowledge, let us weave them together, combining, as Diller suggests, support and inquiry, "enabling the conditions for true rapprochement between nurturance and criticism" (Diller 1993, p.5).

...Because the community practices and values support for students as persons, who are cared for and appreciated as constitutive members, students can be given a ground of personal worth apart from, and separable from their achievements, or shortcomings as academic learners. This may help us to short circuit tendencies toward a confused merger of being and doing in which self-worth becomes based on performance, and mistakes become indicators of flaws or deficiencies in one's very being as a person. When criticism is not experienced as undermining one's whole sense of self, we open up to the possibility of "hearing" criticism without being personally devastated by it, which then means one is more likely to be able to acknowledge mistakes and thereby learn from them...criticism can be transformed into mutual helping activities when done among students themselves as peers within a "community of inquiry." By participating in trial and error procedures, making corrections along the way, and learning from each other, students can experience criticism as an inherent part of their own progress, as ways to accomplish group ends, to become better players in the game of inquiry, or pursue their own learning (Diller 1993, p.5).

During my work at Gilford Elementary, following "my" first graders into their second-grade loop with their teacher, Wendy Oellers, I participated in a "lesson" concerning the concept of balance. This particular

learning experience particularly exemplifies the kind of inquiry and transformed criticism described by Diller and the use of the visual arts as a vehicle for inquiry, problem-solving, and the performance of understandings and demonstration of diverse capabilities. The children were studying the concept of balance within an interdisciplinary unit designed around the theme of machines. I introduced the children to the artist Alexander Calder and his sculptural mobiles. The children observed and analyzed how he suspended different kinds of shapes from a series of armatures that looked out of balance but that were actually finely balanced. They spent the week experimenting with points of balance and distribution of weight using one armature and up to four shapes: a seesaw-oriented mobile. They also spent the week designing and decorating personal shapes and forms for the creation of a large mobile on Friday.

Story: Mobiles

As a group the children decided on a standard of quality work: taking their time, not rushing, carefully preparing patterns and designs, helping one another to cut carefully, and sharing cool ideas with one another. I had shown them a technique for transforming two shapes into a form and they invented four more techniques for creating forms and combining shapes. On Friday, they were full of excitement and anticipation to build big mobiles. Wendy had bought specially colored straws, paper clips, and rubber bands to complement their decision to make quality mobiles. As we discussed the making of plans and brainstormed possibilities as a group, the concept of a simple mobile became one of endless possibilities and an invitation to invent. As the children worked, they constantly engaged in critical discussion with one another asking questions such as, “which looks better together, should this go over here or there, look, I have a new idea, let’s try it out, can we do this instead, there’s another way we can balance this, how can we do this, I’m going to try...what if this is here what will happen there...?”

Little Stefan, who has the greatest difficulty reading fluently, created a twelve-tiered mobile of intricate construction. Collaborating with Billy, he invented an extended telescopic armature. Katlyn decided to invent a completely different kind of mobile—“like a hanging sculpture with balance, too.” Kyle decided to have only three tiers but elaborately decorated his shapes with detailed drawings of underwater scenes observed from the class aquarium. Billy invented new ways of attaching tiers and creating suspensions. Brian invented a new construction technique for forms and discovered a new

pattern...all done with careful attention, confidence, pride, and care for the creating, the creation, and one another.

When the mobiles were shared in a “critical” discussion, the children celebrated the individuality of each invented mobile and also shared their trial and error procedures and discoveries. Julie asked if Mr. Tocci, the principal, could be invited to the class to see their mobiles, which were now exhibited upon a cord suspended across the ceiling. Yes, Mr. Tocci came down and the class decided that he should bring Stefan’s mobile to the office so the whole school could see his wonderful mobile. The children made this decision without any sense of competition or hierarchical valuing. They all had created wonderful mobiles, but Stefan needed to be acknowledged for his special talent in building and constructing and inventing. They all demonstrated their understanding of symmetrical and asymmetrical balance, fulcrum, distribution of weight, and counterbalance. They all engaged fully in inquiry-oriented problem-solving and creative inventing, which promoted individuation and diversity of solutions. They all worked together, helping one another, appreciating one another, and inspiring one another. Stefan literally glowed, as did everyone.

Criticism in this context is an approach to nurturing learning that involves shared feedback. This feedback is reflective, evaluative, supportive, and constructive. Criticism has become confirmation. Learning, we know, also implies being in a state of transition, of moving both forward and backward, and forward again, of not being static, and of becoming as in Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development. Yet this state can not emerge in isolation or without feedback.

Learners do not simply internalize concepts presented by an adult. Instead, they consider new ideas as they relate to existing knowledge constructing their knowledge base. However, they need to make these constructions visible for other’s reaction before they can internalize the conventions and knowledge of the culture. When others respond to the ideas, participants must consider how these compare to their thinking. This process is continuous as the learner develops higher-order thinking and demonstrates what Vygotsky meant when he claimed that thinking developed through social interaction (Dixon-Krauss 1996, p.71).

Caring critical feedback is such a form of response and should come from all members of the learning community: teacher, other learners, and self, dancing across, between, and among all these members. Just as each individual within the compassionate community receives care, becomes a giver of care, and develops self-care, so, too, each individual receives critical feedback, gives critical feedback, and

internalizes feedback. Internalized feedback may be manifested through acts of self-reflection and assessment of one's work and progress. Critical feedback actually begins as soon as the learning experience is encountered and continues throughout the entire learning process, for it is an inherent and natural part of the learning process. Thus, critical feedback evolves in both the public studio of the learning community and the private studio of one's inner self.

Feedback will eventually include a broader public space or gallery beyond the classroom where there exists an array of performance standards, skill standards, normative expectations, knowledge values, and, many times, uncaring judges and strangers. This very situation, I believe, necessitates the providing of our children with a different model and context of criticism, which nourishes their self-confidence while continually challenging and inspiring ongoing inquiry and learning. In this sense, critical feedback becomes a form of inter and intra personal dialogue, or to use the language of care, engaged responding, which enhances, rather than diminishes, sense of self and confidence in self. The development of confidence concerning criticism coupled with the nurturance of inquiry and celebration of diverse viewpoints and possibilities may also be a foundational seed for the growth of critical consciousness regarding the multiple forms of oppression and hegemony that surround us (Rogers 1993, Friere 1971, and Weiler 1987).

...In fact, it is precisely because the goal of feminist teachers is to raise questions of and to make their classrooms places where accepted social reality can be questioned that allows these tensions [negotiations of competing oppressions] to surface and be expressed. In more authoritarian classrooms, students may simply reject what is offered as knowledge and not engage in dialogue. And though these feminist teachers do not always recognize the intended meanings or readings of their students on issues of class and race, they constantly struggle to address these issues and to make their classrooms, in the words of one of the teachers, places where, "it's okay to be human." ... We can see in the practice of these teachers, and administrators, the outline of teaching as transformative work in which what is most significant is the building of the capacity for critique and self-critique. Thus, like Paulo Friere, these teachers seek a dialogue with students and encourage them to unravel and understand the dynamics of their own life histories...at the same time, they ground a critical inquiry in a deep respect for their student's lives and cultural values (Weiler 1987, pp. 148-9).

In contrast, I offer my observation of a third-grade art class. There was a distinctive absence of dialogue and attention to the student's values and experiences in this class. The children were directed to draw a giant turtle and invent patterns for the shell. The turtle had to fill the page and be drawn in pencil.

After being drawn in pencil the children were allowed to color their pattern designs with colored pencils. The teacher had provided a turtle stencil and had drawn this turtle with patterns on the board to guide the children. The stencil was the valued turtle image. Proximity to the stencil was the standard for a good drawing. The students were not allowed to get out of their seats during the class except to sharpen their pencils. They were not permitted to speak to one another during the class. Hands were raised before pencils could be sharpened. I observed a child being reprimanded for speaking to another student—he had been interested in the other student’s pattern idea. The class remained silent. At the end of the class, the teacher collected all the drawings and selected two drawings for the class to admire. She praised the children’s ability to copy the turtle almost perfectly and to color their patterns so neatly. She also added that they had followed directions very well and had behaved very well. All the drawings looked quite alike—even the patterns—although representing a range of replication skill. She was not overtly fault-finding nor negative, merely supportive of only one interpretive voice. However, for those students who struggled to achieve the standard of replication, who did not successfully achieve replication, and whose personal imaginings were quite different, the covert message is one of repression and conformity. Your ideas are not worthwhile. Different ideas are not welcome. The true “I” or self is unwelcome, unappreciated, disrespected, and covertly forbidden.

When criticism is understood as a form of engaged responding and dialogue, criticism can become a means of listening and speaking with many voices—accompanied by care and respect. This dialogue between many voices provides the opportunity to investigate many points of view and many positions in space and time concurrently, as in an exhibit of Cubist paintings representing many artists. Different meanings can be explored by many participants, thus preventing the traditional monologic, teacher-based, power-based criticism and opening the doors to insight, change, and constant becoming (Diller 1993 and Bakhtin 1981 and 1993). All voices are welcome and valued in this dialogic conversation as will be many forms of language. Bakhtin focuses on verbal and written language and the differences of such language relative to social, narrative, marginalized dialects and semantic boundaries. These are the boundaries that need to be crossed in order to find the essential human character of language; perhaps even our innermost language.

...there will arise an acute feeling for language boundaries (social, national, and semantic), and only then will language reveal its essential *human* character; from behind its words, forms, styles, nationally characteristic and socially typical faces begin to emerge, the images of speaking human beings... Language (or more precisely, languages) will itself become an artistically complete image of a characteristic human way of sensing and seeing the world (Bakhtin 1981, p. 370, quoted by Hohne and Wussow 1994, p.vii).

I propose that we need to include the languages of all the arts in this dialogue. These language forms are the languages of the heart, the spirit, and the mind holistically woven together and inseparable (Langer 1942). If we are truly inviting the inner self to converse the arts are required.

Artistic form is congruent with the dynamic forms of our direct sensuous life; works of art are projections of “felt life,” as Henry James called it, into spatial, temporal, and poetic structures. They are images of feeling that formulate our conceptions (Langer 1942, p. 159).

These language forms are also more accessible to young children whose verbal vocabulary may be insufficient for their communicative needs or whose learning styles and needs may be best met by offering a choice of modalities. These languages provide boundary crossings for communities composed of children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and for those who may not yet be speaking a common verbal language (Cahan and Kokur, 1998). Furthermore, the languages of the arts cross the more abstracted boundaries of situated space, time, and location. When we add these languages to our responsive dialogue, we provide for a fuller spectrum of voice and of self.

Annie Rogers (1997) writes that dialogue invites the innermost self and invites the courage needed to share this innermost self. She defines courage as being able to “speak one’s mind by telling all one’s heart” (Rogers 1997, p. 195). Her definition derives from the etymology of the word “courage” in the English language. This earlier definition returns us to our own hearts and to the authority of our own experience, rather than emphasizing the bravery and heroism of the symbolic male warrior.

I have begun to articulate a concept of the Self that is inseparable from courage, the determination to speak truthfully, with integrity, to tell a story that has not been welcomed in the world. What I mean by the “true I” is the Self who describes her experience courageously, rendering a story in detailed transparency, voicing a full range of feelings (Rogers 1997, p. 203).

Conversely, loss of this embodied courage is manifested by a loss of the ability to speak one’s mind by telling one’s heart. Bakhtin also describes the essence of dialogue as the affirmation of our mutual

innermost and precious self.

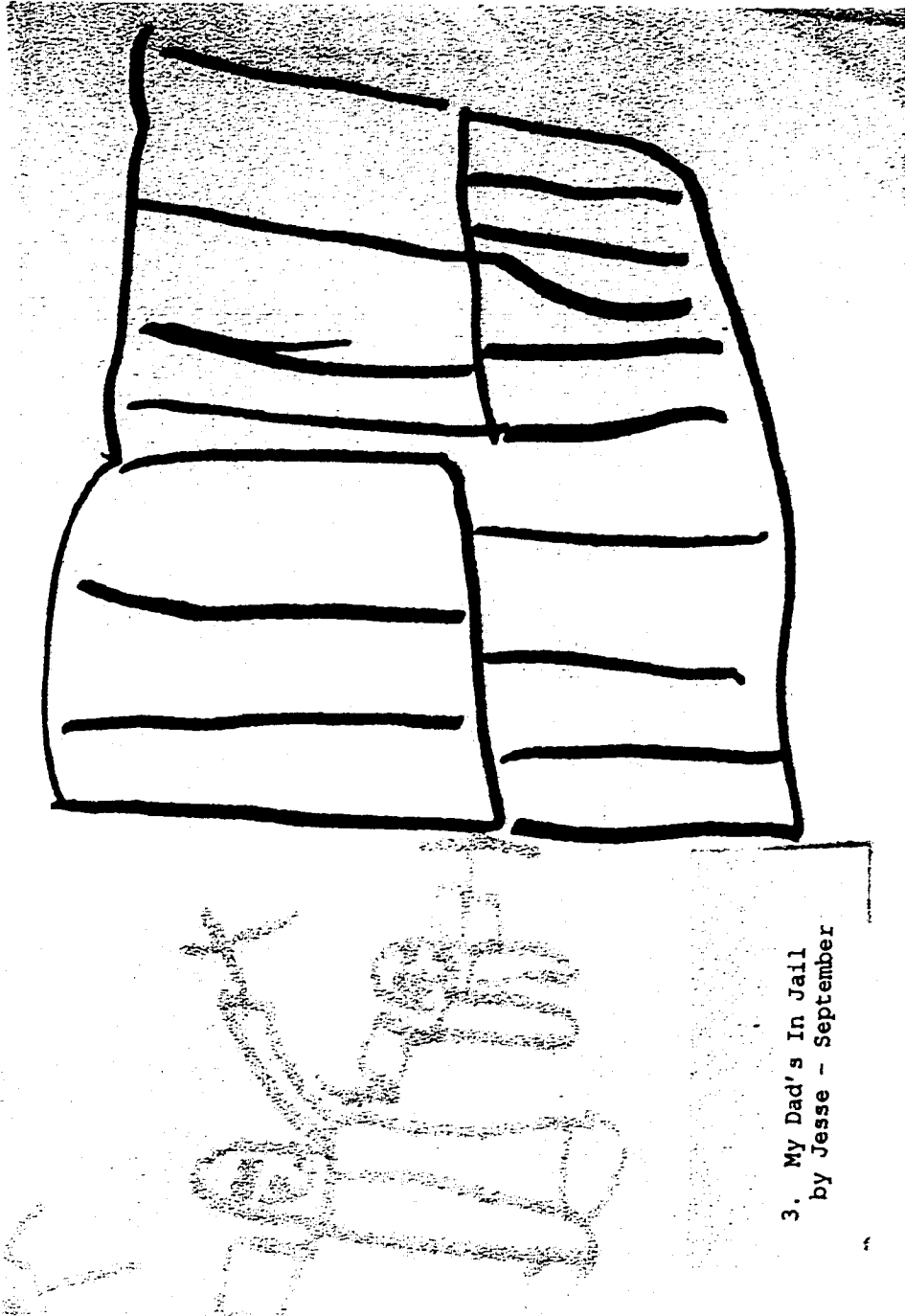
...the Self does not emerge in isolation to others, but as a response to others. The "I" can only be defined in terms of its relationship to "Thou" or other and that relationship is developed through dialogue. Language serves two purposes: it is the glue that binds the diversity of its members together and also the mirror that reflects those members to each other. Through discourse the members learn who they are (Heikinen, Ed.Hohne and Wussow, 1994, p. 118).

Bakhtin wrote that "...only in communion, in the interaction of one person with another can the man in man be revealed for others as well as for oneself (Bakhtin quoted by Simroth James, Eds. Hone and Wussow 1994, p. 180)

Story: Jesse's Dad

Jesse is so very angry. In our first-grade class he struggles to control this anger and not to kick or bite when he is upset. When he smiles, his face is so stiff, more like a grimace than a relaxed smile. It is September and we are getting to know one another. Jesse has discovered that he enjoys drawing in my sketchbook. We have shared how some artists, like Kandinsky, express their feelings in their pictures. Jesse asks me for my sketchbook and quiet time to draw. He draws for almost thirty minutes (his standard attention span at this time was about five minutes). I know this drawing is special to him and I give him and his drawing my full attention. Tell me about your drawing, I invite...he tells me that this is me and this is my grandmother, she is happy because I am going to live with her...he stops. I ask him about the large orange shape in his drawing that is overwhelmingly big. He tells me this is a jail, the jail where his Daddy is going. And you know, they don't feed you good in jail and he's going there forever and he might die!!!

My encounter and engagement with Jesse exemplifies the telling of all one's heart as an act of need and courage. He concretely acknowledged and told a most unwelcome story of worry, anguish, and heartbreak. Jesse could not have shared his most heartfelt worries and concerns in words only. His inner dialogue began as he worked in the sketchbook. His anger and frustration were connected to his deeper feelings of worry and sorrow. As he drew, trying to create a happy picture of him and his grandmother, trying to create a different reality, his inner anguish was touched. Through the use of lines and marks he gave form to his true feelings. As he was enabled to identify and reflect upon these feelings in his image, he was enabled to translate these feelings into words.



Our dialogue began with him showing me his drawing. My act of attentive caring called forth a mutual act of beholding and sharing. Now Jesse could tell me his inner story using pictures and words. He revealed his most anguished inner self, his heart, to me, in an act of courage and trust. This is a form of communion from which I, the teacher in this case, can give and receive care and further extend continued understanding and support.

Closure

We have returned to our spiral constellation: sense of self, love, partnership, community, relationship, service, and joy. We have engaged in acts of empathetic care and connection. We have invited and met in a meeting ground of I-Thou relationships. This depth of relationship, this revelation of one's innermost self, sharing of that self, and welcoming of that self by another, occurs and reoccurs only within a care relationship or compassionate community. When the community is perceived as threatening and uncaring this intersubjective dialogue between selves will not develop, the courage described by Rogers will be silenced, and instead the self will withdraw. Such a situation has profound educational implications, perhaps ever more so as we consider the fragility of the selves entering our classrooms today.

First grade

First week of school. September.

First community ritual of the day: Circle.

Sitting in a circle, cross-legged and nervous, the children hold tightly to the edges of their rug mats—an extra layer of cushioning that identifies each child's specific spatial place in the circle. My territory! We are learning to greet one another by shaking one another's hand, looking each other in the eye, and saying, "Good Morning," with our names included. One by one we greet each other, slowly rippling tentatively from one point in the circle across all our bodies and back again. This has been very difficult. Many of the children can not look each other in the eye, can not speak good morning out loud, and others have difficulty reaching a hand out to their classmate. We do not know each other yet. We do not know if we will be safe here. Circle creates an immediate physical proximity and focuses our attention to one another. What will we see? Hear? Touch? Feel? Speak? Will we be okay? The inner self is watching but has

not yet joined our circle. Circle is only a name—a geometric configuration.

First grade.

Last week of school. June.

First community ritual of the day: Circle.

No more rug mats—only a couple of rolled up sweaters and a sweatshirt bunched up under an elbow or a hip...we sit cross-legged but not straight up. We tend to lean against one another now, the need for body contact to affirm our care for one another. Body spaces merge and blend. A potted tree has joined our circle. As we greet one another (and the tree), I observe not only the strength of eye contact but the smiles within the eyes, the warmth of giggles in the voices, the clammy squeezes of warm handshakes, and the current of energy flowing through the circle of our bodies. Once the greeting has returned to its source, the children ask for more. “Can we do warm fuzzies?” asks Julie. This is a silent hand squeezing around the circle with eyes shut. “Can we do compliments?” asks Maria. This is the sharing of “I likes” that has developed from “I like your shirt” comments to “I like being your friend” or “I like how you helped me...” The children do not want to stop today. In my observation journal I have written that it is the end of the school year and there is an imminent sense of departure although most of these children will stay together next year since they are a looping class. But September is far away. Leaving school is next week. And so the children ask for more circle time—staying together in an intimate circle of caring and cared-for selves. “Let’s play telephone,” suggests David. This is a game of whispering and listening, of paying attention, of watching body language, and of the telling of a story that changes throughout the telling. How will it change? The circle becomes even closer, bodies begin to overlap, and weave together throughout the story. The innermost self of each child is now participating and present. We feel safe, cherished, and connected. Our circle is no longer a name, it is a sacred space.

Peter London, speaking during a seminar entitled *Drawing Closer to Nature* (1997), reminded us who were participants that as we draw closer to nature, to our innermost self, we look both inward and outward. The Latin root of the word “Nature,” “naturus,” implied no dichotomy between man and nature—nature being that which comes of itself, unfolds, and becomes what it will be. As we unfold,

he guided, we find our way home to our center and the center of others. And the world, instead of being a hostile and dangerous place, becomes an intrinsically and infinitely sweet place. This is the place we need to cultivate in our classrooms and schools.



CHAPTER V

VISUAL ART AND THE LEARNER

Story: Terry

It is September. I am with my first graders at Gilford Elementary School. We are drawing pictures of our various kinds of families as we begin to share our personal stories with one another. I observe Terry who often displays behaviors of kicking, biting, and hitting when he becomes frustrated. At this time, he had a rather short attention span and needed to have frequent intervals of movement in addition to attention. He often took things home from the classroom without asking and could even be physically hurtful to his own self. Today, he is sharing watercolors with Jeff as they draw and paint their respective pictures. I see his face light up as he exclaims, "Look at the colors I made!" Jeff looks and tells him that he thinks they are awesome! They decide to share these colors, too. They begin a friendship that will last until Terry moves away in December.

I ask Terry to tell me about his painting in progress (see sample). He points to a large, dominating person schema at the left. The person is as tall as the paper. "This is my Dad." I notice that Terry has created tremendously large circles with long lines projecting outward all around that re-present his father's hands. Jeff interjects and asks, "Where do you live? Where's your Mom?" Terry then creates a small house at the far right. Between his Dad and the house he paints swirls of carefully mixed colors. He tells me that he is not painting his Mom because she and his Dad fight a lot and she might get hurt. Subsequent drawings in his writing-drawing journal depict many images of Mom and Dad fighting or mad.

As time passes, I observe that Terry totally relaxes when he makes art. He shares and cooperates with others easily, he helps others, he volunteers to set up materials, and he is overflowing with ideas and enthusiasm. Whenever he creates a picture or design, he takes great care with his images and then adds a final layer of colors or collage papers that completely cover up his picture. One day, during an activity when Terry was in the process of making his picture and we had to temporarily stop for lunch, he asked me for a large piece of black paper to cover up his picture. He then asked if we could find a safe place to keep it. We

found a small cubby and placed it inside. Wendy and I realized that his covering up of his carefully created images was an act of care and protection. They had great meaning for Terry and he did not want them to be hurt. At long last, in the month of November, he slowly let his images remain uncovered. When we engaged in making self-portraits during early December, he drew large quilt-like patches on his face but did not cover up his face. He said, "I'm decorating my face."

When it was time for Terry to leave us (an event that occurred quite suddenly), the class decided to send him a goodbye letter. Wendy asked the children what they wanted to say to Terry and offered to write their words on the big writing easel.

Dear Terry,

We wish you could be here for everyday... We miss you. We like the way you played with us. You worked hard for those stickers. We hope you will see us again. We hope you're happy.

Love, Mrs. Roche's first-grade class.

They then made a fold-over book full of their hand prints, which they sent with their letter. Throughout the year, the children would point to some of Terry's artwork that remained in our classroom gallery and tell me, "That's Terry's picture. He's still with us!"

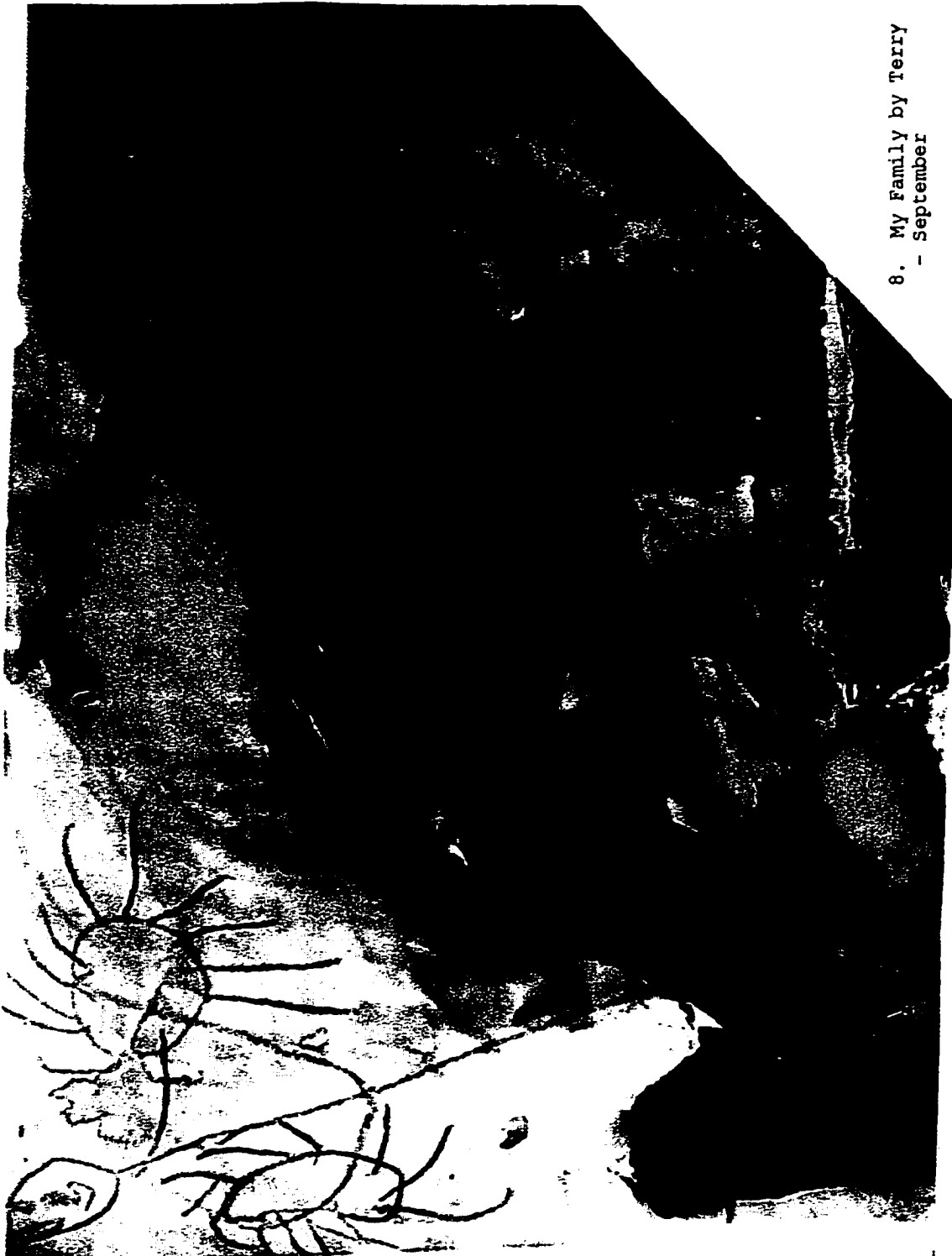
Introduction

I believe it is of utmost importance for the reader to develop an understanding of the visual arts as a universal language with which we can construct meaning, communicate, and become whole. I have developed four key sections within this chapter that address a reconceptualization of art, the process of symbolization and the use of mediational tools, children's artistic growth and development, and the development of polyphonous dialogue.

Language serves as one of our primary means of conceptualization and for presenting and sharing our inner lives, our inner thoughts and feelings, the stories of our lives, with others. Language, when considered as a complex symbol system through which we make meaning, reflect upon our experiences of the world, conceptualize, and communicate to others, is manifested by many forms of representation. These forms of representation each offer unique epistemic opportunities for making meaning, communicating, and interpreting. Each form of representation provides a unique lens of perception and understanding, giving us,

as Eisner (1994) describes, access to unique worlds.

Within this chapter I am calling attention to our innate creative and artistic capabilities and our inherent need to make, create, shape, reshape, envision, and connect to our self, to others, and to our world. I ask us to reconceptualize art and art-making as part of our whole self and not as an elite practice for special others, nor as superficial decoration devoid of meaning. I call our attention to the role of imagery and symbolization in the development of our metaphorical thinking, our relational capabilities, and our empathic responsiveness. An in-depth presentation of children's artistic growth and development is provided that focuses on the ages between four and eight years old since I am particularly working with first graders. This presentation seeks to provide an insightful understanding of children's art-making that



8. My Family by Terry
- September



6. Collage by Terry -
October



7. Self-Portrait by
Terry - November

is sensitive to their intentionality, needs, capabilities, and values. Throughout this discussion, I differentiate meaningful art-making for children from well-intentioned yet superficial activities that inadvertently subvert children's innate creative capabilities and confidence. I further emphasize the need for diverse mediational tools and forms of representation that can be chosen for the fullest growth, development, and expression of all learners. As we do so, we enter into dialogue with a polyphony of voices and languages; telling our stories, listening to one another, and reading the world. Thus, I call attention to the role of polyphonous and multivoiced dialogue in developing compassionate community and consider dialogue in relation to the arts and community.

A Concept of Art

Art as Behavior

What do I mean when I refer to the configuration of letters ART? What does art have to do with education, with intelligence, with learning, and with community? Why should art be valued and supported in our schools? Aren't only special individuals artistically talented anyway? I never had art in school and I'm very successful—why should my kids have art when they don't really need it? These are questions that have been asked of me during my experiences as a teacher. I believe that these questions indicate the abundance of misunderstandings concerning the very nature of art and the degree of separation that has emerged between art and self in so many individuals in our present culture. Since the word “art” has so many personally connotative meanings and associations, I will try to establish a common ground for discussion based upon my spiral constellation of care, community, and relationship, and my understanding of art. I ask the reader to understand that an extended discussion regarding the nature of art could take an entire lifetime and perhaps another, so I am presenting only a small conversation but one that is essential relative to the development of my vision of a care community.

The root meaning of the word art is to fit together and we all do this every day. Not all of us are painters but we are all artists. Each time we fit things together we are creating—whether it is to make a loaf of bread, a child, a day...if the job is well done, the work of art gives us an experience of wholeness called ecstasy—a moment of rising above our feelings of separateness, competition, divisiveness to a state of exalted delight in which normal understanding is felt to be surpassed (Kent 1992, pp. 4, 5).

Janet Olson describes art as a form of story through which we reflect upon our relationships with

the world, with our self, and with others. The telling and the sharing of these stories “helps people to understand the universal human condition and to be part of the universal human family” (Olson 1998, p. 165). Perhaps the earliest visual stories may be found on the walls of the Lascaux Caves in France, which archaeologists and anthropologists have identified as having been created during the Paleolithic era, around 250,000 B.C. (Kellogg 1970, Gardner 1980, Eisner 1994, and Dissanayake 1991). Until the most recent times people from all cultures have universally created images, objects, and structures to manifest symbolically their beliefs, their values, their knowledge, their feelings, and their experiences of life since time began. These are their stories—our stories as human beings. Until the very recent inventions of movable type printing processes in the fifteenth century and photographic imaging in the nineteenth century, rendering images and shaping objects were the primary ways people recorded and transmitted meaning over time and space.

These physical manifestations of the human condition, because of their immediacy to feeling and thought, communicated across time and space, and in so doing, enhanced the quality of life of both makers and observers (Barker 1991, p. 12).

The idea of “art,” according to art historian and anthropologist Ellen Dissanayake, encompasses all of human history and all human societies. Art can be viewed as an “inherent universal (or biological) trait of the human species, as normal and natural as language, sex, sociability, aggression, or any of the other characteristics of human nature” (Dissanayake 1991, p. 15). This means that every human being is innately a creative and artistic being. However, within our Western conceptualization of art, according to Dissanayake, we have progressively developed the idea of art as being separate from our lived lives, separate from personal meaning, and as being distinctly separate from each human being except for a small percentage of exceptionally and exclusively talented individuals who choose to become elite members of the art world as artists, critics, dealers, gallery owners, museum curators, historians, etc. Dissanayake reminds us that this perception was not always so and is not so within many non-Western cultures. Dissanayake emphasizes to us that art-making and involvement with the arts is one of the most striking common features of human societies.

I find it significant that the word “art” acquired its modern meaning and its existence as a concept as the arts themselves became practiced and appreciated by fewer and fewer members of society. In small scale, unspecialized, pre-modern societies, individuals can generally make and do everything that is needed

for their livelihood. There, while there is no abstract concept of “art”, everyone must be an artist—decorating their bodies and possessions, dancing, singing, verifying, performing—even when some individuals are acknowledged as being more talented or skillful than others. In these technologically simpler societies, the arts are invariably and inseparably part of ritual ceremonies that articulate, express, and reinforce a group’s deepest beliefs and concerns. As the vehicle for group meaning and a galvanizer of group one-heartedness, art-conjoined-with-ritual is essential to group survival—quite literally art for life’s sake (Dissanayake 1991, p. 21).

This art-for-life’s-sake view of art, or this species-centered view of art, considers art-making and experiencing as an innate human behavior, a predisposition, an inherent drive we all share. This capacity is manifested by our propensity to “make special”—particularly that which we care deeply about or which has deep personal significance. Making special in this sense transforms the ordinary and the mundane into the significant, meaningful, and ultimately symbolic. Dissanayake provides the example of embellishing practical tools with carved designs as early as the Paleolithic Period. This making special with embellishment is also a recognition that such embellishment could “evoke a special experiential state...the meaning of an object could transcend its merely utilitarian features if the object received special treatment...from the decorative there emerged the representational” (Eisner 1994, p.16). The tool could be useful in and of itself or it could represent something beyond itself. Eisner asserts that this recognition of symbolic representation was a critically significant cultural achievement, “because the creation of a symbol implies the presence of another, someone for whom the symbol can have meaning. Meaning shared through the creation of symbols constitutes one of the primary devices for maintaining and advancing a culture” (Eisner 1994, p.17). Such a transformation process requires great attention, engagement, and care from the maker—whether in the making of an embellished tool, a birthday cake, a garden, a painting, or an embroidered quilt. So, too, experience is heightened, intensified, and even elevated for the maker and for the observer when appreciating also involves great care and attention. Such an understanding of art as a behavior shifts our attention from the object or commodity to the activities themselves or processes of making, creating, participating, appreciating, and interpreting—of fitting together, finding relationships, and developing heightened states of awareness.

Making special is a fundamental human proclivity or need. We can see it in such simple things as when we cook special meals and wear special garb for important occasions and find special ways of saying important things. Ritual ceremonies are occasions when everyday life is shaped and

embellished to become more than the ordinary...Looked at this way, art, as making the things one cares about special, shaping and elaborating the ordinary to make it more than ordinary, is fundamental to everyone and, as in traditional societies, deserves to be acknowledged as normal—encouraged and developed (Dissanayake 1991, p. 25).

Such a view of art includes us all as participants without socio-cultural or historical bias or elitism. The arts have always been with us and are within each of us; reflecting our ideas and feelings and values of beauty, sublimity, transcendence, connection, and relationship and expressing our concerns regarding the existential conditions of life: death, love, memory, suffering, loss, desire, joy, temporality, hope, faith. These themes and stories have resonated in the arts throughout human history and across cultures as abiding and universal concerns embodied through our acts of making special.

Story: I Am an Artist

I have shared these understandings of art with my students across all levels. As discussed previously, many of my students have developed an habituated stereotypical attitude towards art and artistry, which represents, I believe, our cultural norm of elitist art and art makers and which represents a narrow conception of “real” art as photorealistic painting, drawing, or sculpting. I found that my Gilford children, as early as first grade, believed that art was the making of exquisite naturalistic-representational pictures by special adults called artists. I wanted to help them be able to value and cherish their personal art images and to see themselves as artists—to believe in themselves as artists. I read them the book I Am an Artist by Pat Lowrey Collins. The story begins, “I am an artist when...I stop and listen to sound of crunching snow in the still forest, when I look for falling stars in the night sky, when I look at an orange until I feel round too...” and ends, “and you are an artist too whenever you stop and look and listen carefully to the world...”

Following this reading, we brainstormed in three small groups: when were we artists? Since this was September, and the children were not writing at a level to match the flow of their ideas, Wendy Oellers, a parent volunteer, and I became the scribes for each group. We wrote the children’s words on poster-size paper in marker and the children added their decorative embellishments! Their ideas included

I am an artist when I am coloring and making patterns...

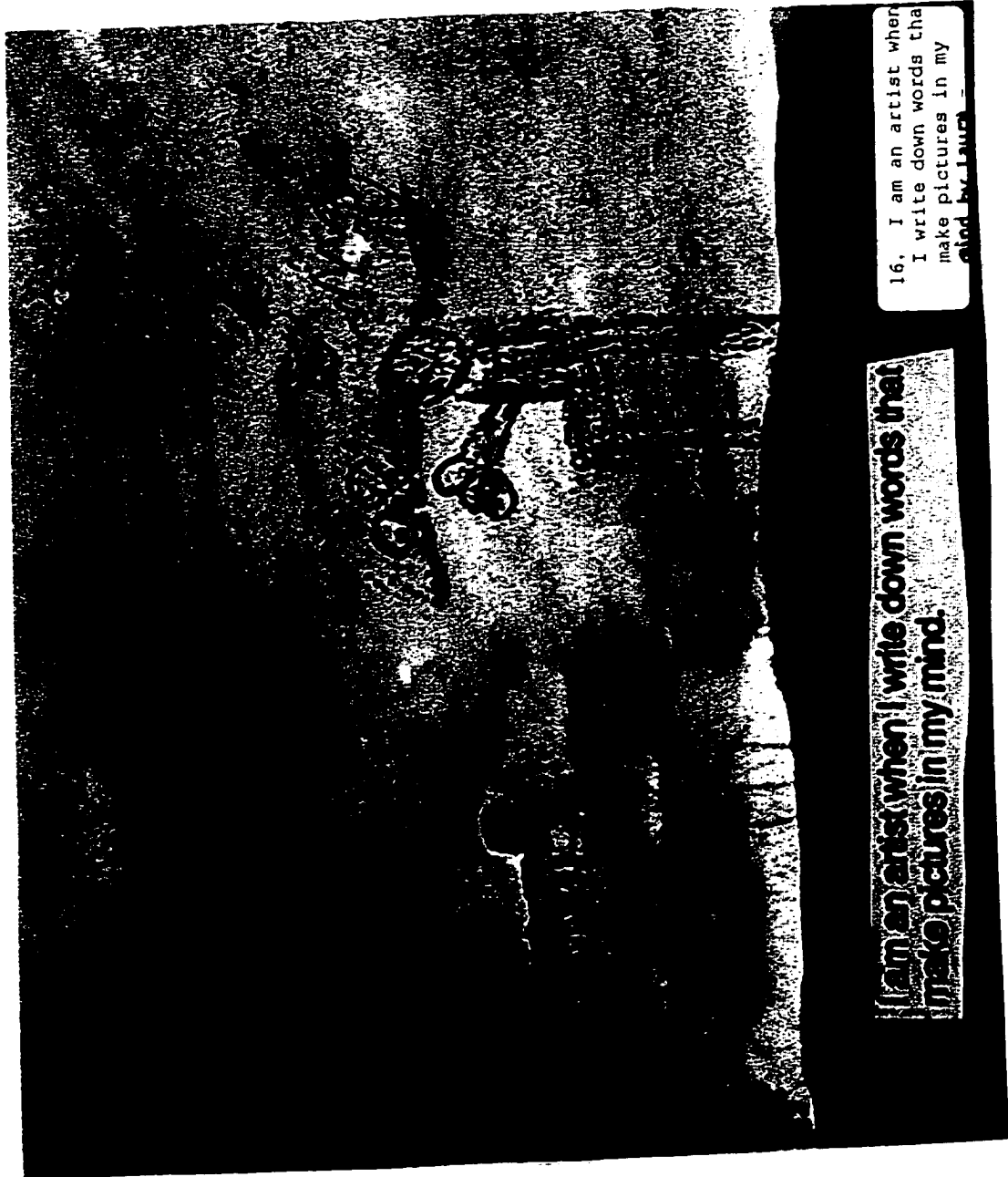
I am an artist when I see a deer running into the dark woods...

I am an artist when I go over a jump on my sled and feel like I am a rocket
shooting off all the way to the moon...

I am an artist when I jump out of a tree and pretend I am parachuting...

We further extended the children's ideas by sharing our brainstorming and deciding to make pictures of when we each were artists. The children chose art media available from our art center: crayons, watercolors, and colored pencil. After their pictures were completed, we shared our individual stories of each other's artistry, and we displayed the children's images with titles given by the children in the hallways outside our classroom. The children proudly proclaimed themselves all to be artists from that day forward [see samples].

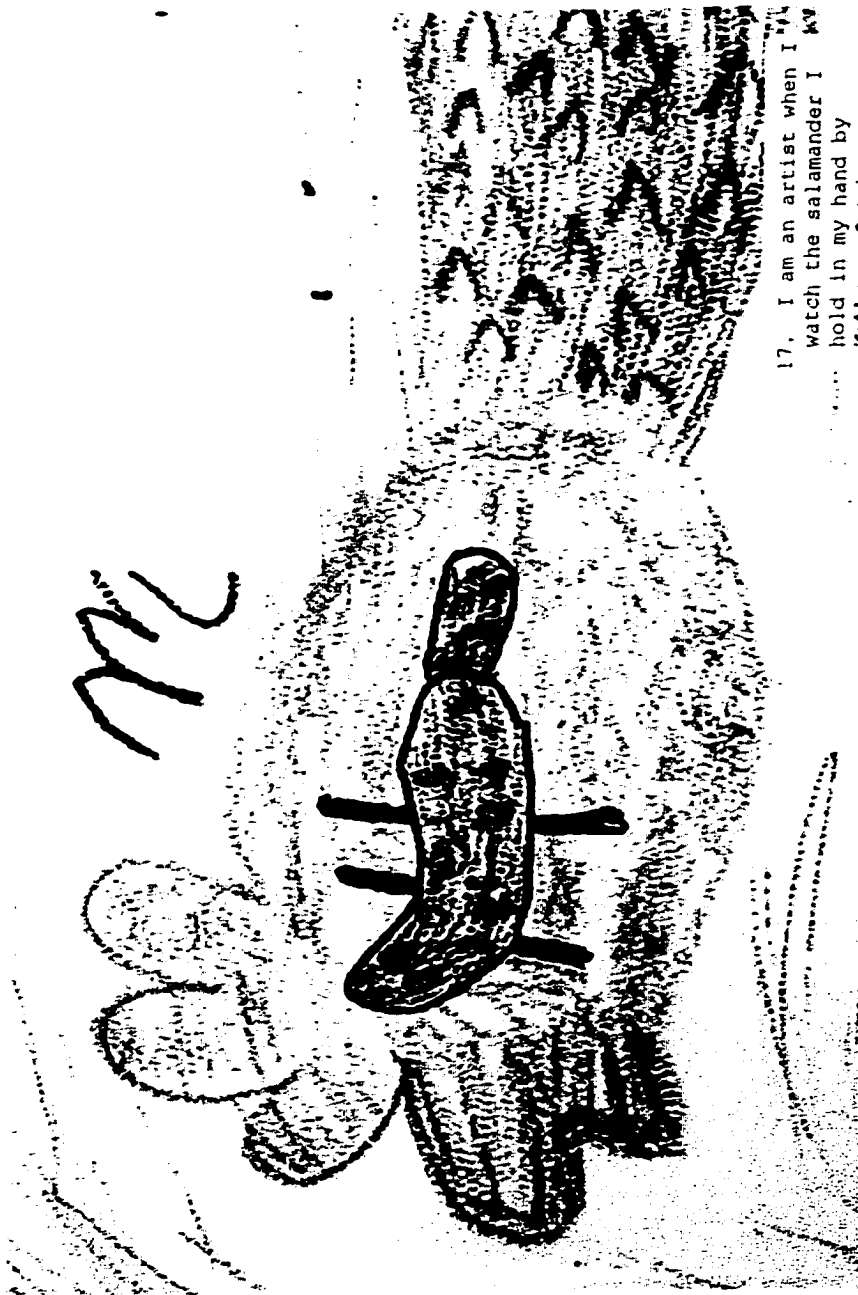
I also share this same book with my students at Plymouth State College who attend my course, Visual Literacy. One of the components of this class includes weekly reflective writing and responding to our readings, class discussions, and studio explorations. One of my students had never entertained even the slightest or remotest possibility of considering herself as being a tiny bit artistic. She wrote, "All my life I was led to believe that I was not a good artist, but I learned in this class that no matter what you do, you are an artist. Just playing on the soccer field, as I did all my life, I was an artist on the field. I had my own style of playing and I played with grace, skill, and coordination. Just because I was not using art materials does not mean I was not being an artist." Many of my students describe similar attitudes: "In many classes that I have had before, I have never felt confident that I could draw or do art. It was always not right, because it had to be what the teacher wanted it to look like, or it was just something you colored in and if it was the wrong color, then you would get laughed at...those teachers made me think that I could not make art no matter how hard I tried"; "The greatest thing this class has done for me is taught me to overcome my fear of art-making and the sense of 'I can't,' which often accompanies one's doubts. I was able to think about my own perceptions and misconceptions about art and myself as an artist. I've learned that I am an artist"; "For many years I ignored my artistic interests because I was afraid of failure (from a previous experience with a rather harsh art teacher). Creating art has allowed me to open the doors to creativity, and has allowed my imagination to run wild. I have unveiled a new confidence in my artwork, and I am no longer afraid of failure. I have finally realized that there is nothing to lose, as long



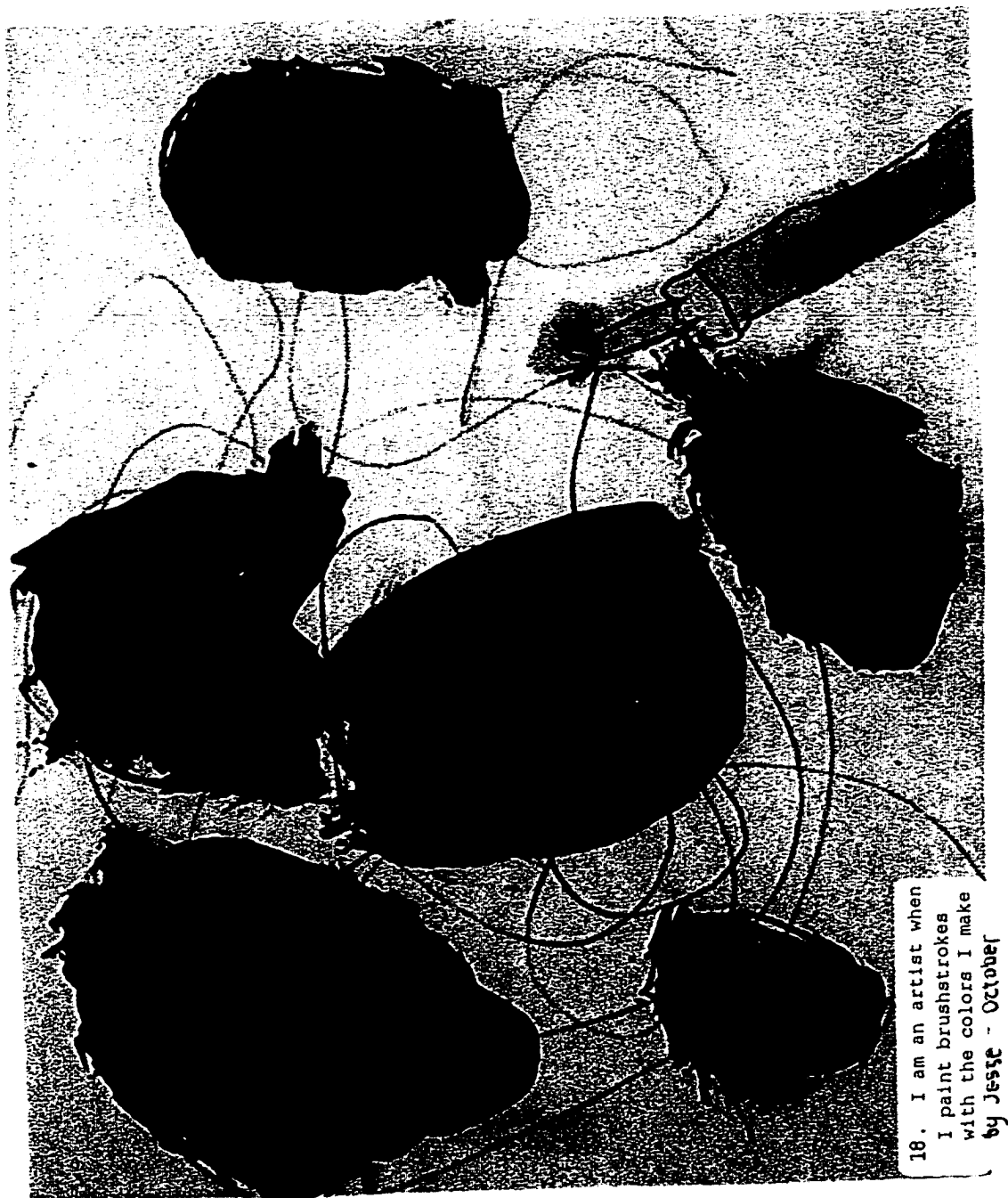
I am an artist when I write down words that
make pictures in my mind.

16. I am an artist when
I write down words that
make pictures in my
mind.

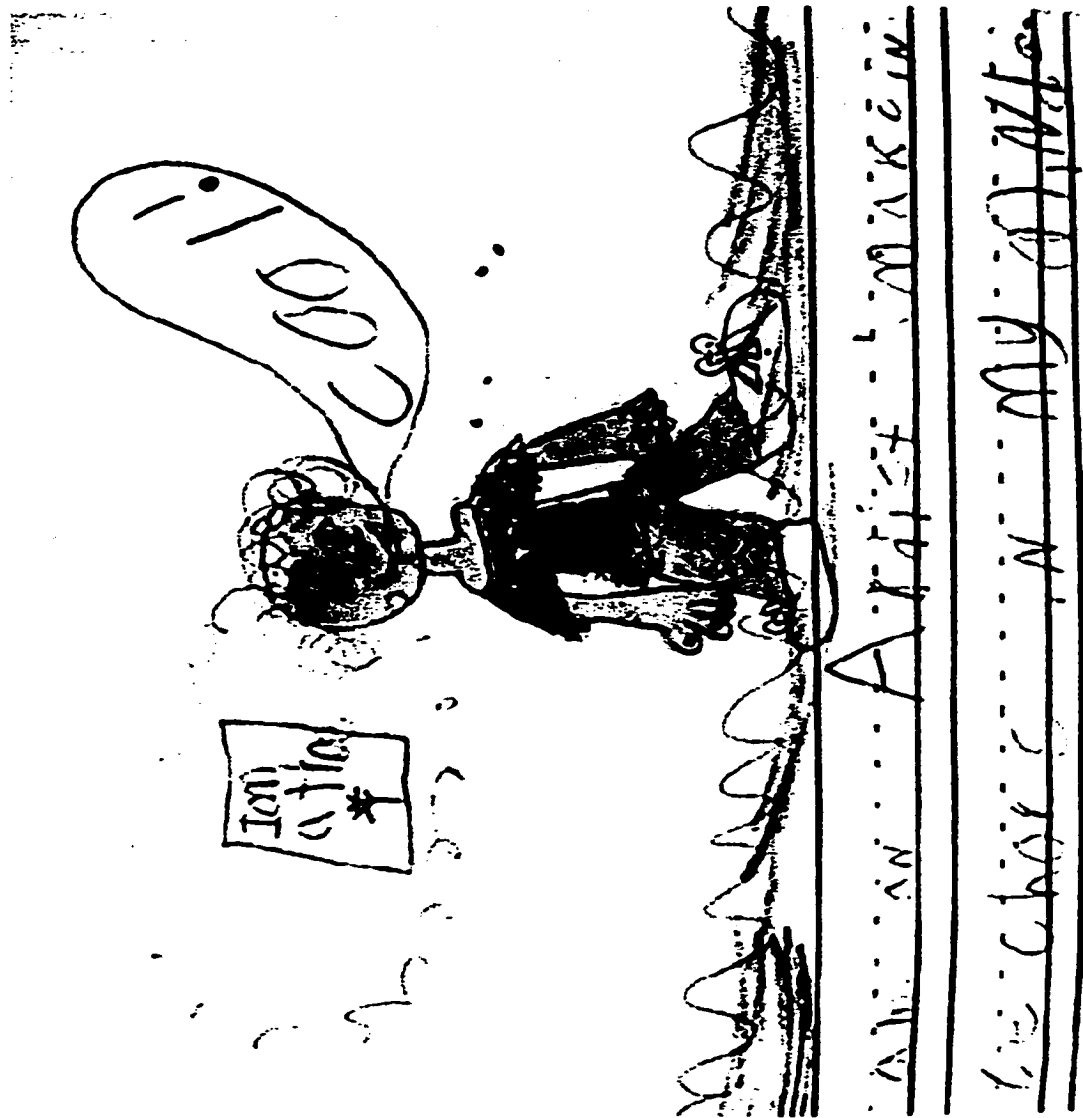
called by Laura



17. I am an artist when I
watch the salamander I
hold in my hand by
Kathy - October



18. I am an artist when
I paint brushstrokes
with the colors I make
by Jesse - October



14. I am an artist
making the colors in my
mind by Katelyn - November

as you give it your best shot”; and finally, “I remember one quote from the Corita book by Meister Eckhart and it was, *the artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist*. That quote was one of the first things I learned from taking this class and I only wish I had learned it earlier. The quote means to me that art is something that comes from your heart and soul. It is something that you create to express yourself. The art you make can mean something to you but something totally different to someone else.” (All of these writings are from my personal collection of student writings from PSC).

The voices of these students resonate with Olson, Dissanayake, and Corita Kent, as they remind us that not only is art-making a basic human drive, it is a fundamental need. There is a well-known quote by the artist Pablo Picasso describing how he spent his youth studying so hard to be able to draw and paint like the Renaissance master Raphael and how he spent the remainder of his life trying to learn how to paint like a child. As educators, we must ask ourselves how and why this innate capacity for creating art slowly diminishes and erodes to such an extent that by the time our children graduate from high school, they no longer believe in themselves as artists. These seeds of doubt are sown early as my work with first graders demonstrated so shockingly to me. Even more poignantly, can we ask ourselves, how can we nurture this capacity and guide it to flourish and blossom continually?

Meaning-Making and Being Present

Contemporary “art-making” (I am referring specifically to the visual arts) in our schools has too often become focused on the replication and production of beautifully crafted things devoid of personal meaning and significance. These hand crafted things may be highly decorative and aesthetically pleasing to behold, may require a high degree of eye-hand coordination, may require perceptual attention to detail and structure, and in spite of a slight degree of imagination usually may require a high degree of conformity. Such things also require signatures in order to identify ownership rather than the observation of uniqueness. London (1992) refers to such things as secondhand art. Secondhand art does not require inner reflection, personal investment, discovery, personal intention, individual conceptualization of symbol and metaphors, or meaning-making. Instead, secondhand art remains at a level of surface decoration that distracts us temporarily and diverts our attention from our concerns, our worries, our feelings, and our experience of life.

The object of a painting is not to make a picture—however unreasonable that may sound. The picture, if a picture results, is a by-product and may be useful, valuable, interesting as a sign of what has past. The object, which is back of every true work of art, is the attainment of a state of being, a high state of functioning, a more than ordinary moment of existence (Henri 1960, p.159).

A common example of such secondhand practice is the use of xeroxed coloring exercises where a culturally stereotypic image has been created by an unknown artist using black outline and the children are asked to color it in. During my work at Gilford, I noted an interesting phenomenon as the children returned from their library special in the month of January. Our classroom had been given one of the giant trash cans (due to the amount of messy art activities we engaged with daily) and we kept it by the entry door. As the children came into the classroom, Wendy and I observed that each one of them dropped a piece of paper into the trash can. Naturally we were quite curious. What was going on and what had happened in the library? I went up to Katlyn as she was discarding her paper. I asked her what was happening. She replied that they had had to do some dumb coloring during library after reading Mother Goose stories. She continued telling me that Mrs. _____ had given them these pictures to color and that she wouldn't let them make their own pictures! That was not being an artist, Katlyn explained to me, and the children were really upset. She told me I could have *it* if I wanted because she was throwing *it* out anyway. I scooped up her colored-in xeroxed Humpty Dumpty as an artifact and a reminder—once children have experienced sustained meaningful art, they know the difference! Ironically, Mrs. _____ is very supportive of arts education and has been a driving force in advocating integration of the arts throughout the school. However, the message received by the children was that she did not value their art-making nor believe in their capabilities of making art. I believe an additional unintended message of a standard of normative conformity as a value was also sent. This activity exemplifies the kind of misunderstandings that are so prevalent concerning the nature of art and art-making and the kinds of covert teaching messages being conveyed to children that gradually silence their inner artist.

Instead of engaging in superficial production of objects without meaning, let us return to the use of creative process to enhance and elevate the quality of our lives and consider art-making as a powerful process of transformation of consciousness. This would enable us to shift from the mundane and ordinary to

an elevated state of consciousness that in turn would enable heightened perception, envisionment of possibilities, openness to discovery, grappling with our spirit, tapping into sources of renewal, connecting with our inner life and with others, and engagement in the making and shaping of meaning, and to journey towards enlightenment. London (1992) reminds us that the purpose of art within the Native American cultures was to become enlightened, wise, and whole and to make the community enlightened, wise, and whole. Our goal is meaning, deep and wide.

Regardless of the final product, then, we are thinking of art education as a process and not a final product. We think of it as a means to an end, and the end is always the individual! We will be interested in the effect that art has on people. And it is needless to say that with the development of greater sensitivities and greater understandings of the importance which creative process has for individuals, the aesthetic product grows too...it was MOST important that this woman had this great (aesthetic) experience in which, probably for the first time, something of herself was revealed to her that helped her into greater human perfection... (Lowenfeld 1958, pp. 2-3).

Therefore, let us consider art not as the thing but the process of investigation, inquiry, discovery, and being present totally with all of our senses and attention, which enables us to “see underneath the map of our usual consciousness” (conversation with London 1997). Let us allow ourselves to wonder, to become incredulous, and to tune ourselves to the world, to listen and to speak with the world drawing ourselves closer and closer to nature—to our own nature, to the nature of others, and to the greater world of nature. Let us develop an affinity to our deeper, deepest inner self, which can reach out to the inner selves of others and become completely mindful. Let us create a spiral constellation of mindfulness and weave together the many layers of our consciousness and intellect: somatic, skeletal, unconscious, dreaming, intuitive, emotive, sensory, cognitive. Let us become enabled to inquire about our wonder and our unknowing.

We have lost contact with the earlier more profound functions of Art, which have always had to do with personal and collective empowerment, personal growth, communion with this world and the search for what lies beneath and above this world...in order to engage in imagemaking with the fullness of power that the primary act of creation has to offer, we must remove the barrier that otherwise keeps us at a harmless distance from any authentic creative endeavor, this barrier may be characterized as a densely woven thicket of everything we have ever been told about art ...no matter how rich the legacy, all this secondhand stuff gets in the way of picking up a lump of clay and squeezing the life force into it, being in awe of ourselves as a genuine creative force in the universe, having magic in our hands, fashioning a new world that awaits our presence to bring it forward. For this kind of real experience, we need to

draw from within (London 1989, p. 5).

London (1989) asks us to consider art not as the making of well-crafted and beautiful things, but as a transformative vehicle that can move us to a higher level of purpose and consciousness that then urges us to move on and to act. Such an elevated consciousness shifts behavior from the making of aesthetic amenities, the replications of past forms, and the production of hollow objects to a personal and collective empowerment of discovery, constant inquiry, and envisionment of possibility.

Simply observe a young child of three or four years of age engaged with paint or clay or even a pile of leaves...As the lens of their imagination interacts with their total sensory engagement, these materials are creatively transformed in a process of linking connections—associations, memories, responses, feelings, ideas—which in turn invite the making and discovering of deeply rewarding patterns of meaning untouched by the imposition of adult cultural values, inhibitions, standards, and stereotypes as the artist's voice flows forth...I recall, during the earliest phases of my student teaching when I was asked to substitute for the art teacher, I planned and implemented a lesson involving the exploration of the sensory and plastic qualities of clay. Throughout the explorations we shared our discoveries and let our imaginations take flight, creating a wide variety of fantastic creature beings and things. One little boy simply kept up a cycle of forming a sphere, poking it, squashing it into a pancake, and reforming it...I was concerned that he was not “engaged” and went to speak with him. He informed me very vehemently that he was angry and he was tired of making things the teacher told him to do, and that he did not want to make anything. I did ask if he wanted simply to keep shaping and pounding the clay and to this he responded yes. So we arranged an appropriate surface upon which to continue. Later, he proudly came up to me and showed me what looked like a formless lump of clay to my insensitive eyes. “This is my cave. It's dark in here. I like it here. I'm safe here.”

Multiple Forms of Language

Symbolization and the Generation of Holistic Metaphors

Visual art makers (artists) of all ages and from all cultures have created forms and images that emerge from their inner reflections upon their lived experiences and meanings that have the power and impact to evoke rich and varied responses in beholders. The artist, according to Langer (1957), is engaged in the creative process of generating holistic metaphors: creating symbols and symbolic relationships that integrate sensory responses, ideas, and feelings, while selecting connotative layers of meaning and relational patterns. For the young child, this is manifested by connecting the qualities of the gestural experience of moving a paintbrush to the experience of watching the movements of a grasshopper hopping, resulting in the calligraphically beautiful up-and-down swishing line being described as the happy grasshopper playing with friends. The child's painting is not a picture of the grasshopper but a symbolic, metaphorical embodiment of grasshopperness as directly experienced.

This process is a highly complex and abstract cognitive act involving a further integration of multiple ways of knowing the world: rational, analytical, irrational, intuitive, affective, and sensory with sensory/affective being at the center. Thought and feeling, feeling and form are brought together in metaphor. As Dewey describes, "Art is the fusion of felt thought (Dewey quoted by Eisner 1997, Keynote Presentation, Teaching for Intelligence Conference).

Any ideas that ignore the necessary role of Intelligence introducing works of Art is based upon identification of thinking with use of one special kind of material: verbal signs and word. To think effectively in terms of relations of qualities is as severe a demand on thought as to think in terms of symbols, verbal and mathematical. Indeed, since words are easily manipulated in mechanical ways, the production of a work of genuine Art probably demands more Intelligence than does most of the so-called thinking that goes on among those who pride themselves on being Intellectuals (Dewey 1934, p.46).

For the visual artist, such symbolization is non-verbal and takes on a richly sensory visual form whether two dimensional, relief, or three dimensional in an endless variety of combinations. The function of artistic language, writes Langer (1957), is not to be definitive and analytical, but to be expressive, interpretive, and evocative: to articulate the ineffable aspects of our realities that can not be restricted to or expressed through specific word symbols and discursive language. Eisner (1994) reminds us that we have developed multiple forms (multiple modalities for expression and communication) for the representing of our experiences and that each form performs unique epistemic functions. Not only may I express a very

particular aspect of my experience, but I also can create a form that holds the possibility of meaning and new meaning for others. In order to express and communicate fully the depth and breadth and mystery of our holistic life, we need to be enabled to choose from many forms of language and representation.

I use the term “language” here to refer to a complex symbol system used by a cultural group for the purposes of reflecting upon, ordering, organizing, conceptualizing, and communicating feelings, ideas, and experiences to one’s self and to others. Thus, we use language for the purpose of representing our consciousness and to construct meaning.

...meaning is not simply found, it is constructed. In a sense, the ability to “encode” and “decode” the meanings constructed from different forms of representation requires a form of literacy. Not literacy in the literal sense, but literacy in the metaphorical sense. Literacy, as I use the term, is the ability to encode and decode meaning in any of the forms of representation used in the culture to convey or express meaning. I believe, one of the major aims of education is the development of multiple forms of literacy. What we ought to develop, in my view, is the student’s ability to access meaning in the variety of forms of representation that humans use to represent the contents of their consciousness (Eisner 1994, p.x).

Langer (1942) describes the languages of art as presentational symbolism. Presentational symbolism addresses our needs to express and consider multiple categories of experience and knowledge, especially emotion, intuition, appreciation, dreaming, and sensory feelings, which are best expressed, according to Langer, through the connotative use of language and symbol systems—through metaphor.

Metaphor can be considered as the guiding principle of expressive language. Metaphor is relational, associative, analogous, intellectual, personal, affective, sensory, and highly universal. Metaphor is the opposite of precise, technical, definitively specific discourse. I posit that presentational symbolism provides us with the most meaningful uses of language relative to the fullest growth and development of the self as a harmonious whole. Presentational symbols offer rich choices of imaginative and expressive possibility: the symbol system is chosen due to the nature of the expression, the experience and knowledge of the individual, and the concepts and feelings being articulated. I may choose to write a poem about my inner joy at gazing upon the mist rising above the birches and the sense of wonder I experience, or I may take out my paints, or my colored pencils, or my inks...Each art form and each art material is unique and contains a metaphorical gestalt and implicit significance. Each reveals and contains what is beyond the reach of discursive language and beyond the mundane shell of everyday perception (Greene 1995 and Langer 1957).

Through the use of multiple forms of language that are sensitive to our multiple modalities and through the development of “multilingualness,” we also honor difference and individuality. We begin to counterbalance an educational tradition long dominated by standardization and commodification. We need

...an alternative to that of national standardization of goals, standards, assessment, curricula, report cards, and a business oriented, competitive view of schooling and an intellectually narrow concept of mind...The personal construction of meaning is not an educational liability (except in a system obsessed with standardized outcomes), but one of education’s most prized virtues. It is through such constructions that the commonweal is enhanced. It is through our differences that we enrich one another (Eisner 1994, p. 9).

I believe that we must have multiple languages with which to affirm our multiple realities. The construction of knowledge is a relational and relativistic process in which no one language should assume absolute authoritative status to the exclusion of others. We need to explore continually forms of thought and language that may be tentative, uncertain, illogical, unguaranteed. Thus we take risks, challenge conventions, and reach beyond the status quo. Boundaries are called into question and multiple attitudes invoked. We can touch upon the possibilities of constructing our own meanings and develop our personal “polyphonous voice.” This “polyphonous voice,” according to Paley (1996), is a voice that integrates the personal, the poetic, discursive, critical, and symbolic.

This is the voice of artistry, creativity, and liberation. Metaphor provides a sphere whose center is everywhere and periphery nowhere and which demands a high level of participation but excludes the idea of goal and direction. Metaphor restores the nonsequential energy of the lived historical memory and subjectivity as fundamental components of meaning in representation and serves to tell other stories than the official sequential or ideological ones produced by Institutions of power... (Edward Said cited by Paley 1996, p.9).

Image, Perception, and Cognition

According to Langer (1942), the assignment of elaborately patterned symbols to certain analogies in experience is the basis of all interpretation and thought. Broudy (1987) states that all images are sensory patterns. Furthermore, our sensory perceptions establish the foundation of our relationship with and our understanding of our world.

We construct a representation of the world as we experience it, and from this representation, this cumulative record of our past, we generate expectations concerning the future; expectations which, as moment by moment the future

becomes the present, enable us to interpret the present (Britton 1970, p.24).

This world representation is formed of images. According to Kaufmann (1979), images are the structures or processes that intervene between perception and response. We most often refer to visual images, but each of our senses produces sensory images and patterns. Such imagery allows the individual to elaborate an abstract verbal input into a more concrete and sensorily vivid chain of experiential memories, associations, and understandings (Lowenfeld 1958). The creation of image-symbols derived from sensory qualities requires the use of metaphorical thinking: moving from the concrete physical domain to the abstraction of essences and combinations of patterns into vivid images full of denotative and, more importantly, connotative meanings and associations. These image-symbols, according to Broudy (1987), are central meaning-making structures that play a key role in the learning process. They allow us to construct understandings of commonly shared experience and provide us with a symbolic language of communication, reflection, and expression. Thus metaphor joins cognitive, sensory-perceptual, and affective responses to experience and provides for a higher degree of meaning-making and relationship. Our interaction with the world and with one another becomes not only informative but also transformative.

Story: Lines, Marks, Colors, and Feelings

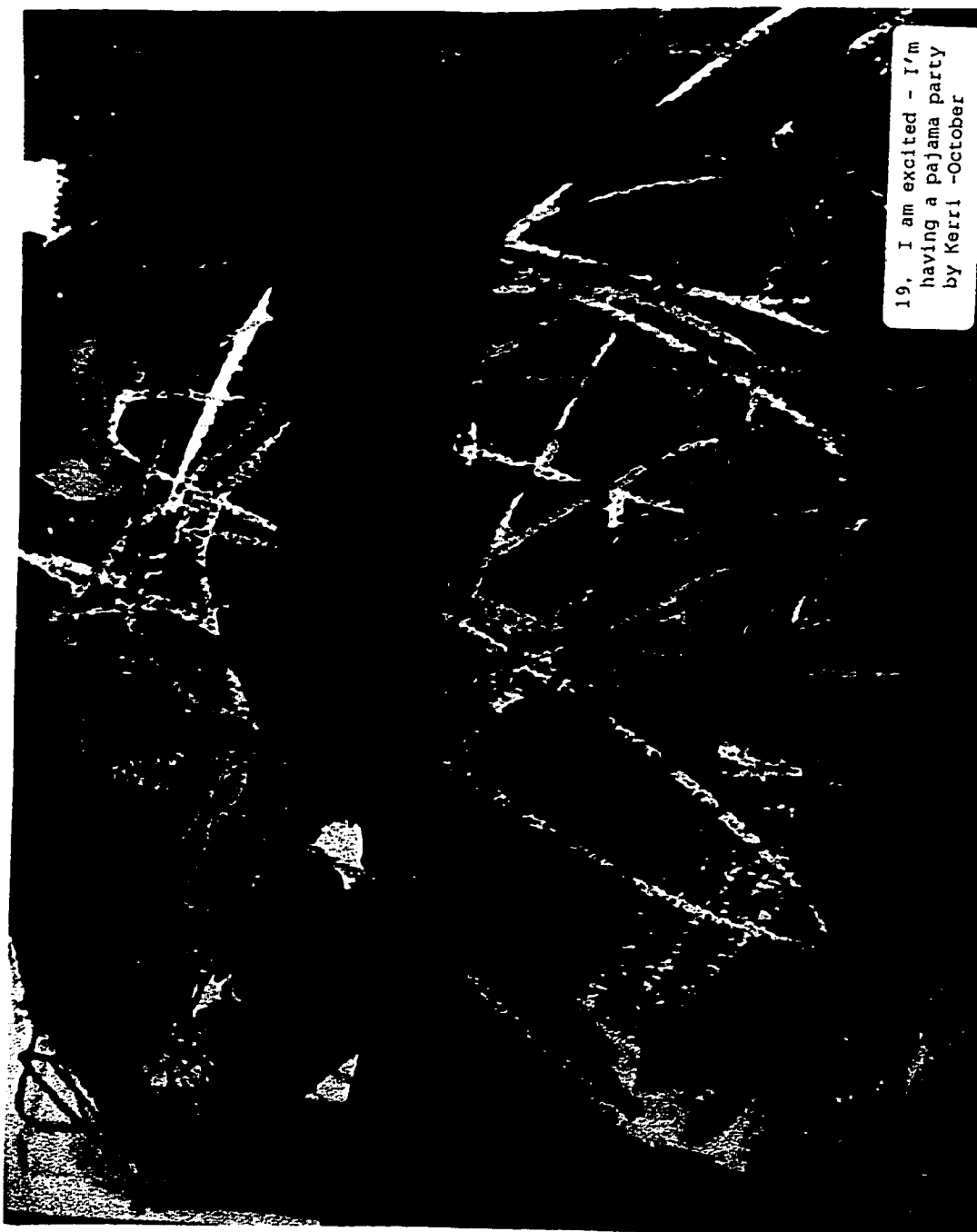
Can young children engage in such metaphorical construction? Early in the school year at Gilford, I had explored the possibilities of mark-making and the expressive qualities of line using the media of crayons with my first graders. We used our bodies to provide concrete physical associations and translated our body movements to possible movements we could express with marks and lines. We began with clearly defined descriptors such as straight, horizontal, vertical, and round. We then played with interpretations of fast, slow, curvy, tall, short, loopy, skipping, floating, falling, heavy, flying, jumping, angry, sad, loud, gentle... The children drew lines over lines using the crayons and changing colors as desired. Finally I asked the children to choose a color to watercolor over their lines to show how they were feeling at that moment. During the entire process we shared our different interpretations and representations of movement and feeling qualities as I emphasized that there was no right way and that we would each be different. When we shared our work together, we discovered some common approaches to certain qualities: loud tended to be thick and pressed hard, soft was more delicate and light, floaty was at the top, loopy had lots of round

curves, angry tended to be jagged, while happy tended to have an abundance of curvaceous lines. We discovered that lines could show, could represent, qualities of movement, sound, and feelings! I then presented the children with a reproduction of a Kandinsky painting and shared a brief contextual biography of the artist and emphasized how Kandinsky wanted to make a painting without using any recognizable pictures: just using lines, shapes, and colors to show his feelings. The children began by observing and describing the kinds of lines, shapes, and colors they saw in the reproduction. They were challenged to use as many vivid picture-painting words as possible (picture-painting words being words that could paint pictures inside your head). They developed a rich word bank and interpreted a whole gamut of emotions. Two days later, upon my return to the class, we decided to try our own abstract emotion paintings. The children went to the class art center and chose their combinations of media: crayons, colored pencils, and watercolors. Once again we discovered each other's individuality of interpretive representation while simultaneously sharing our emotions with one another [see samples].

These are highly physiognomic metaphors but how marvelous were the children's inventing of marks and configurations of marks and colors through which they expressed their individual states of emotion and articulated different qualities of emotions. Wendy Oellers and I both sensed the development of a higher awareness of emotions and sensitivity towards the emotions of others. When the images were completed they were displayed throughout the room creating a gallery of each other's feelings. These metaphorical representations further demonstrated highly personalized expression and a willingness to explore, take risks, and improvise.

[to improvise is] an immediate, spontaneous art of the present, requiring full attention and awareness in the moment. It is not a refinement of technique but a turning inward and an ability to listen to one's self, others, and one's surroundings on a very deep level, in order to allow the flow of intuitive responses. It is not something that can be learned analytically or outside the moment of experience (Mittman 1998, p. 6).

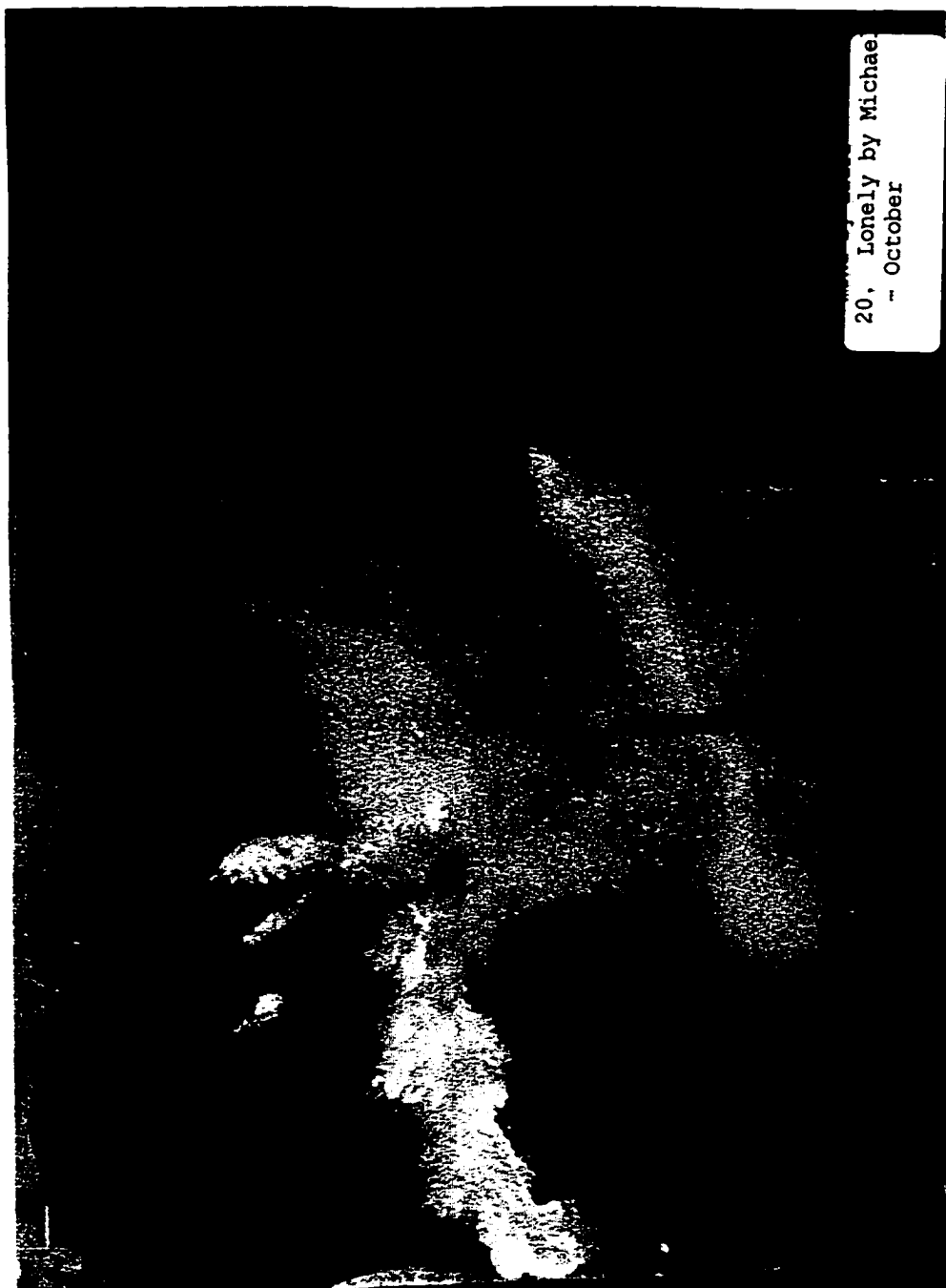
The children trusted in themselves, in each other, and in our developing community. "Promoting



19. I am excited - I'm
having a pajama party
by Kerri -October



October.
21. I am Peaceful and
Soft by Amy - October





22. I am excited because
there is a storm coming
by Kallyn - October

knowledge that generates trust and allows for unplanned alternatives is a way of beginning to deal with the painful mistrust and competition for power that happens with issues of difference” (Mittman 1998, p. 7). We discovered connections and relationships. We embraced contextualized understandings of one another and left behind the right answer and the best answer and better answers. Our multiple truths were welcomed, valued, and shared. As we let ourselves explore our emotions using the form of visual imaging we not only created visual metaphors, we celebrated what Mittman refers to as a poetics of possibility.

When we begin to play metaphorically with sensory qualities and perceptions, a vast realm of experiential associations opens up and our imagination opens the doors of possibility and creativity. Broudy describes this as becoming “emancipated from the constraints of reality” (Broudy 1987, p.14). Such a shift of attention makes possible new visions from alternative perspectives and stimulate what Greene refers to as wide-awakeness, or the mode of imaginative awareness. Broudy describes two forms of imagination: reproductive and productive. Reproductive imagination combines and recombines elements and images freely without structure or intentionality—pure play and rearrangement of what is already in the mind’s repertoire. I build fairy castles from old boxes and ribbons. Productive imagination produces something new: a vision emerges that previously did not exist. I can create my vision of a new world. Lowenfeld (1958) emphasizes that imagination is a unity of thinking, feeling, and perceiving where perception involves the refinement of our sensory experiences and abilities. The refined use of our sensory experiences refers to being satisfied not with superficial generalizations and fast sensory glimpses of experience but with deeply engaged and attentive experiencing involving elaboration, differentiation, emotive involvement, and empathetic projection.

...so to identify one’s self with the experience, to put one’s self into the place of it, is also, identical with, or part of, any creative process...(Lowenfeld 1958, p. 28).

The development of a rich image repertoire or referential base is critical to the development of verbal and written language and to the ability to transfer learning from one context to another (Broudy 1987). As images are metaphorically manipulated, the denotative referential base develops into a connotative allusionary base.

The Allusionary base refers to the conglomerate of images, concepts, and memories available to provide meaning for the individual reader or listener. The Allusionary

base may well be the matrix of reading comprehension...the reader needs a well stocked store of words and images...it is the stock of images with which we think and feel...it functions in the learning of languages—scientific, technical, evaluative; of skills, concepts, and attitude (Broudy 1987, pp.20-22).

The allusionary base provides the foundation for metaphor and poetic imaging. These images enable the movement of thought from the concrete particulars of experience to the abstractness of the conceptual and provide a connection between experienced phenomenon and conceptualization. Broudy asks us to consider how logic without perceptual content and feeling would be empty, just as sensory experience without the organizing structure of concepts would be a meaningless flow.

...these concepts that constitute our conceptual life are images formed within the “material” that each of the senses provides, either singly or in combination with other senses. Concepts precede their linguistic transformation. I argue that language serves as one of the ways in which our conceptual life is made public (Eisner 1994, p.ix).

Mediational Polyphony

Moving across a constellation of sensory images, signs, symbols, languages, and multiple forms of representation, we mediate and construct meaning. Vygotsky (1978, 1986) used the term “semiotic mediation” to refer to our use of mental tools to transfer natural forms of mental behavior to the higher cultural forms unique to humans. Natural behaviors refer to elementary traits of memory, perception, and attention similar to those found in animals. Higher behaviors refer to culturally constructed mental behaviors such as logical memory, selective attention, decision-making, problem-solving, and the use of language—all activities mediated by signs. The process of semiotic mediation is a transformative movement from external to internal—from external social behavior to internalized individual behavior. Consciousness is co-knowledge and the individual’s consciousness can only exist in the presence of social consciousness and language (Vygotsky 1986, Werstch 1991, and Dixon-Krauss 1996).

Any function in the child’s cultural developmental process appears twice on two planes. First it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First it appears between two people as an interpsychological category and then within the child as an intrapsychological category (Vygotsky 1986, p.163).

Learning leads development with the gradual internalization of intellectual processes activated through social interaction—through enculturation—through the process of education. Vygotsky’s mediational tools, according to Dixon-Krauss (1996), are the sign systems that give us control over our

mental behavior—the tools of language. Mediating signs are used to develop and direct thought. For Vygotsky, the primary mediating sign system was verbal and the most fundamental mediating sign was “the word.” According to Vygotsky, the word is first used to form a concept and then become its symbol. The word is the thinking tool used to focus attention while progressing through the process of abstract synthesis: abstracting certain traits, synthesizing these traits, and symbolizing these traits with a sign (Dixon-Krauss 1996). I offer that the process of creating symbolic metaphorical images and visual schema is a parallel process not necessarily involving the word and that may offer an alternative mediational tool for learners.

Werstch (1991) discusses how our culture has traditionally valued and developed through education the primacy of verbal language as our most valued form of representation and voice. He reminds us that there are other, non-Western, cultures for whom there is much less reliance on verbal mediation. Our privileging of verbal mediation “reflects a patterning of privileging that distinguishes the performance of people functioning in various cultural, historical, and institutional settings” (Werstch 1991, p. 12). This bias, he warns, can limit the application of constructs to certain groups and settings. This is of utmost concern for our students who have been labeled or marginalized due to their difficulties in becoming proficient with verbal language. Olson (1998) reminds us that it is the learner who displays difficulty with writing, reading, and speaking who will usually be tested for suspected learning disabilities. She emphasizes her disagreement with this practice of labeling, which can be highly damaging to the child’s still emerging self-esteem and which is insensitive to the actual learning challenges, needs, capacities, and intelligences of the child. Instead of labeling this child, could we not consider the needs and capacities for children to learn with different mediational tools or alternative forms of representation rather than forcing them to a narrow standard.

Over and over again, I have observed teachers who work with students who are struggling with language—particularly with their writing skills—and the usual solution is to require these students to do more of the same: more writing, more reading, and so on. I can’t help but wonder why one would continue a strategy that doesn’t seem to be working. Visual learners need the assistance of the image to reach their full verbal potential. The fact that the drawn image is not used regularly as a tool to achieve a higher level of literacy than is possible using words alone, reveals a serious lack of understanding of art as a language and as a means of understanding and communicating... Classroom teachers have admitted to me on numerous occasions that they feel a sense of guilt when a student spends a significant amount

of time drawing. They feel the student is wasting time and not involved in a high level of thinking (Olson 1998, pp. 194-5).

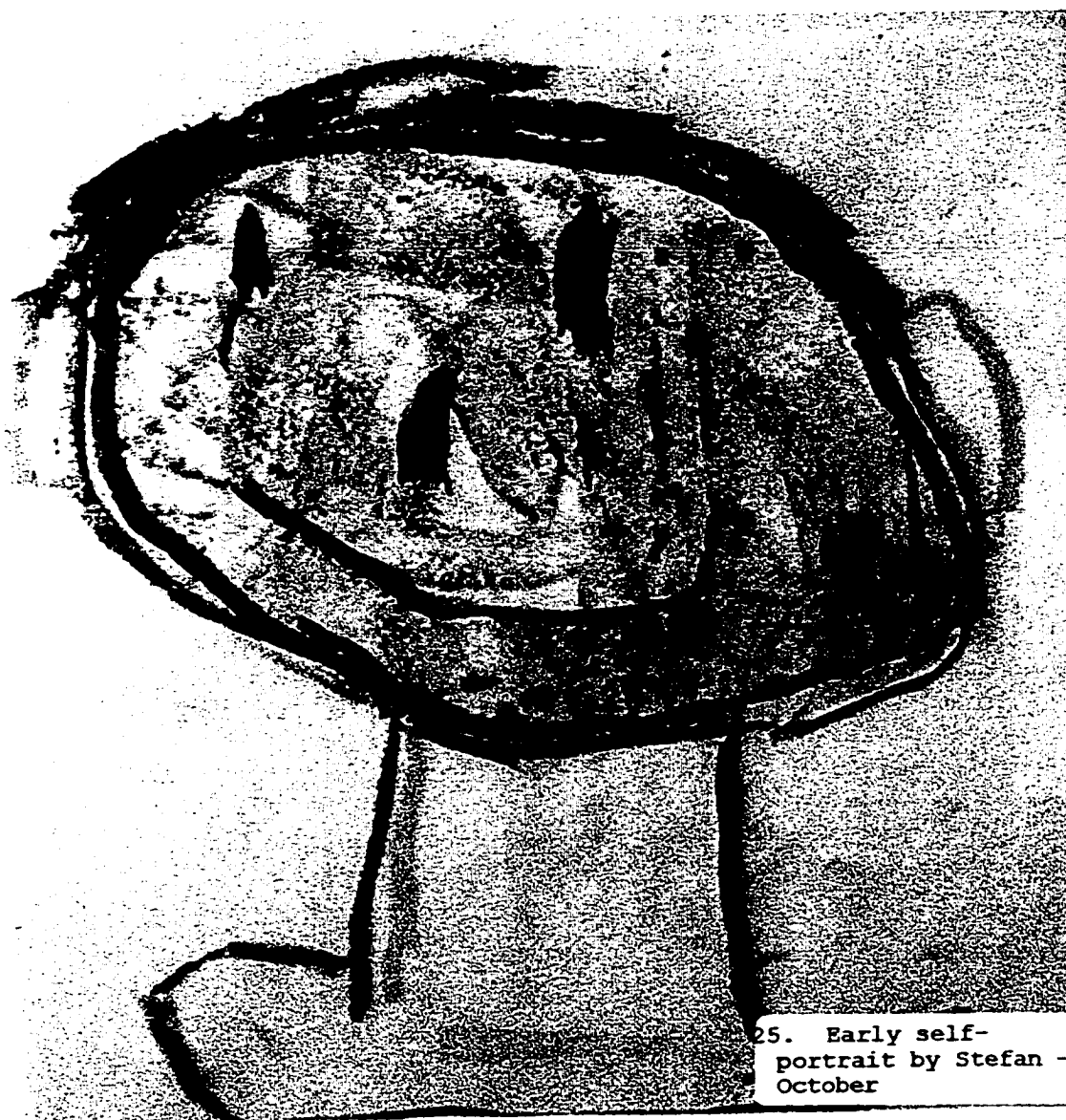
If we acknowledge, with Bakhtin and Werstch, that there are multiple ways of representing reality, multiple ways of experiencing, perceiving, and understanding the same phenomenon, we can apply our understandings of heterogeneity and heteroglossia to thinking and experiencing. We then must also acknowledge the need for diverse forms of representation and reconsider how the privileging of one form can become a means of oppression, especially within the cultural milieu of the educational institution. We can offer choices of mediational tools.

Story: Stefan's Universe

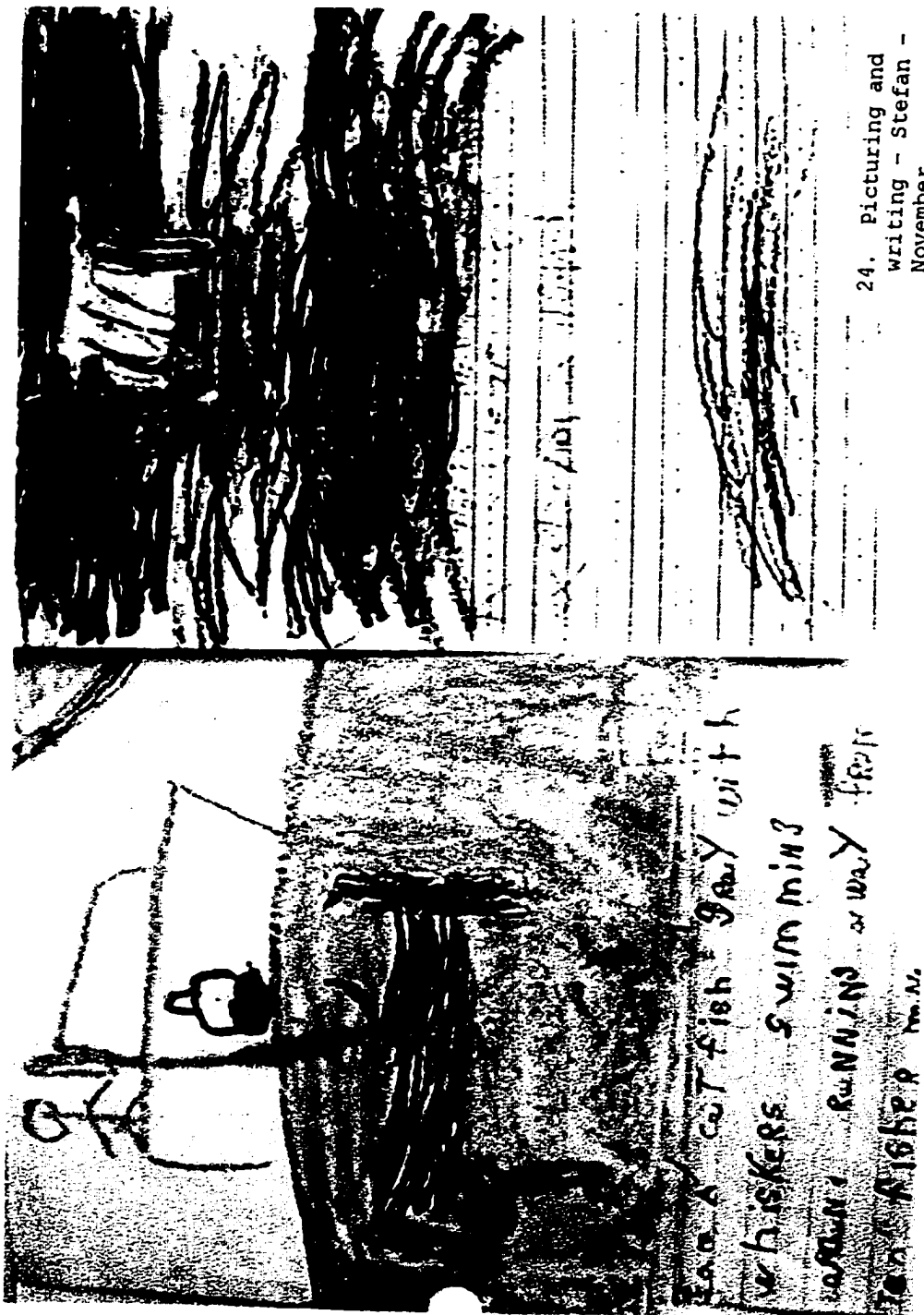
We return to first grade at Gilford. Stefan sees pictures in his head so easily. He speaks very little and his writing is laborious. During writing, his attention is very, very easily distracted and he is inclined to stop in frustration after the forming of only a few words. He definitely does not like writing at all. He loves to make pictures. During the month of February we were experimenting with a new kind of colored pencils and the children were creating personal pictures—whatever they wanted to picture...Stefan, who still was writing and speaking very little, drew with absolute attention for approximately an hour. He then shared his picture with Wendy and with me. An 11x18 piece of paper was completely covered with a complex image dominated by large concentric rings, colored in different colors and textures. These rings were surrounded by a field of black full of images that seemed to me to be stars and moons. Stefan began haltingly but his speech gained in momentum and enthusiasm throughout the telling. He told me that this was a picture of the planet earth. He had drawn it this way to show the inner core of lava, which is so hot it melts everything and it sometimes gets out in volcanoes. There is then a layer of stones and rocks and more layers of earth and rocks until the top where the oceans and the land are. These layers protect us from the lava. The top layer is very thin and the blue and green are where the land and the ocean are. Surrounding the earth is the universe and the ten planets—one was just discovered and does not have a name. Stefan then named all the other planets. He identified comets, and stars, and moons in his picture.



23. The Universe by
Stefan - March



25. Early self-
portrait by Stefan -
October





I ~~W~~ COULD ~~FLY~~ ~~TO~~ ~~OUTER~~
 SPACE AND I
 WOULD FLY TO
 MARS.

I will & to
I will & to
I will & to
I will & to
I will & to

32. if I could fly by
Steven November



He then proceeded to tell me that we know about the universe because of telescopes.

This information was followed by detailed information concerning the construction of telescopes. Neither Wendy Oellers nor I had ever heard Stefan speak so many words or express his knowledge so deeply until this day. We had observed him thoroughly engaged in image-making: drawing and designing using his words, and had decided to trust the process of imaging rather than pressuring him to write. Now in second grade, Stefan is quite a writer, especially of science fiction stories. His last story, "Attack of the Killer Bees," was many paged and became a published book with a planned sequel. His first draft of the story was a complicated picture detailing all aspects of the story and representing the pictures Stefan clearly saw in his mind. He will tell you that he needs to make the pictures first. Are not these pictures his dominant mediational tool? Pictures and images provide Stefan with the capabilities of logical sequencing, selective attention, decision-making, and organizing. Through the use of picture symbols and metaphors, Stefan has been able to overcome his fear of not being able to write. He is a wonderfully strong visual and kinesthetic problem-solver, inventor, learner, artist, and writer. He has slowly but steadily gained a great deal of pride and confidence in his special capabilities, capabilities nurtured through alternative representational forms being used and highly valued.

Conceptualization

Eisner (1994) interjects that imaging facilitates conceptualization far more significantly than word identification. He describes how our conceptualizations of such phenomenon as black holes in space and subatomic particles, phenomenon that we have not directly experienced, rely upon the creation and imagining of mental images derived from our sensory repertoire. Thus we are enabled to conceive of phenomenon that have not been experienced in the empirical world. Each sensory system provides and contributes unique information to our allusionary base. The refinement of our senses can be a means of expanding our perceptual-conceptual capabilities and awareness just as the dulling of our senses can diminish these capabilities. He brings up the question: Do we think in words? What is the role these sensory images play in the development of thought? Again, if we acknowledge the diverse qualities in our environment and the need for multiple mediational means with which to come to know these qualities, reflect upon them, and communicate our understandings of them, are we not thinking multi-modally and

applying multiple symbol systems as we are engaged in thought?

Is it the case, for example, that humans necessarily think in language? Obvious counterexamples immediately come to mind. Our only evidence of any substance is introspective, the introspection surely tells me that when I think about a trip to Paris or a camping expedition to the Rockies, the few scraps of internal monologue that may be detected hardly convey or even suggest the content of my thought. In struggling with a mathematical problem, one is often aware of the role of a physical, geometrical intuition that is hardly expressible in words, even with effort and attention (Chomsky 1973, p.v, quoted by Eisner 1994, p. 30).

We most often speak of visual images but each of our senses contributes sensory images and patterns.

Research conducted by Alan Paivio concludes that the brain stores information in two different modes:

imaginal and verbal. Imagery allows the learner to elaborate a verbal input into a more concrete and sensorily vivid image symbol (Paivio 1971). Einstein also described his thought process as one of playing with images.

The words of the language, as they are written or spoken, do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought. The physical entities which seem to serve the elements in thought are certain signs and more or less clear images which can be “voluntarily” reproduced or combined...But taken from a psychological viewpoint, this combinatory play seems to be the essential feature in productive thought—before any connection with logical construction in words or other kinds of signs which can be communicated to others. The above-mentioned elements are, in my case, of visual and some muscular type. Conventional words or other signs have to be sought for laboriously only in secondary stage. The words or the language, as they are written or spoken, do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought. The physical entities which seem to serve as elements of thought are certain signs and more or less clear images which can be “voluntarily” reproduced and combined.

The above-mentioned elements are, in my case, of visual and some Muscular type. Conventional words or other signs have to be sought for laboriously only in a secondary stage, when the mentioned associative play is sufficiently established and can be reproduced at will (Einstein 1976, cited by Olson 1992, p 5).

When not restricted to one mode of conceptualization, we have the opportunity to develop a fuller range and depth of understanding and awareness. We can view the world through multiple lenses and perceptual viewpoints. Visual imaging is not merely a recording of phenomenon, but an integral component of memory, concept formation, and communication. Thought and language rely upon imagery. The visual expression of ideas and concepts is interwoven with verbal imagery, which is interwoven with visual imagery and so on. However, the visual expressions of students are rarely acknowledged as a form of language that is viable unto itself and that can be questioned, explored, interpreted, and translated into other modes of expression or into other languages (Olsen 1991).

Young Children's Visual Artistic Development

I return this discussion to the consideration of meaning-making and metaphor-making for children made possible through the language of visual art. My scholarship directly addresses the infusion of visual art-making into the daily lives of children as a valued language and more specifically into the lives of the children in Wendy Oellers' first-grade class at Gilford Elementary School. Understanding their artistic growth and development is of utmost importance if we truly wish to nurture each child's holistic development as fully as possible. This means, I believe, being able to address sensitively each child's needs, capacities, and interests and being able to provide each child with multiple literacies and tools for learning. Artistically, in terms of visual art-making, we need to be able to observe, value, and understand children's art and their art-making as a wondrous form of meaning-making and personal expression through the use of visual language that is uniquely their own.

Hence, I believe that it is of utmost importance for the reader to understand children's art-making as a complex journey of development and meaning-making. Such an understanding enables us to cultivate and nurture children's innate visual graphic art-making capabilities sensitively rather than inadvertently diminishing their artistry and helping them to cease to believe in themselves eventually as artistic beings. This kind of understanding enables us to address the meaning-making and metaphorical qualities of visual art as an expressive language rather than subjecting children to superficial and secondhand stereotypic activities inappropriately called art. Too often I have directly observed well-intentioned adults imposing their personal aesthetic tastes and preferences, in the form of guidance and help, upon a child's highly individualistic personal work of art. This kind of imposition disregards completely the intentions, responses, and inner feelings of the child. Again, instead of confirming the child's aesthetic responsiveness and delights, these responses become subjected to the control of the adult. Kellogg (1970) particularly emphasizes what she refers to as the conflict between adult cultural tastes and children's biological taste manifested by the imposition of adult aesthetic formulas upon children that are insensitive to the nature of children's art-making, insensitive to the needs of the child, and insensitive to the emerging aesthetic preferences of the child. She reminds us of a longstanding Western cultural tradition of not valuing children's art and judging their art as immature, insignificant, and incapable in contrast to the work of selected elite, mature adult artists.

A century or two ago few individuals could have conceived of, let alone taken seriously, a book on children's drawings. The mere suggestion that these youthful productions should be pondered, or considered as works of art, would have seemed incredulous...further, any thought of children's drawings as beautiful or intriguing could not have held any currency. A society that valued the realistic drawings of an Ingres, Millet, or a Constable would find little reason to cherish the seemingly careless scribble of its children (Gardner 1980, p.3).

Let us reconsider. Visual art-making for all young children is a means of reflection, organization, and expression of experience. Unique to this process is the use of materials such as paints, fibers, clay, pencils, papers, etc., which become the vehicles for synthesizing ideas, feelings, and sensations into visual metaphors or images. Drawing is a unique yet universal graphic symbol system requiring the complex invention and use of highly personal symbols and metaphors. The representation of visual images through drawing is an inherent, spontaneous behavior in young children that begins with their earliest explorations of mark-making (Kellogg 1970, Lowenfeld 1958, Burton 1983, and Smith 1983). Even as early as three years of age, children are aware that pictures are units of meaning as are words. The understanding of how pictures convey meanings and ideas helps children to understand later how speech and words can be converted into written symbols (Vygotsky 1978, Gardner 1980, and Dyson 1983). The ability to label or name a picture-image integrates verbal and visual images, while the process of image-making integrates sensory, kinesthetic, affective, and cognitive responses to materials and experience (Lowenfeld 1957, Hurwitz and Day 1988, Gardner 1980, and Burton 1983).

Put directly, children's art in all its forms, embodies profound sensibilities about the connections which bind self to world...I want to argue that, all things being equal, if the growth of the children's responses to materials keeps pace with their expanding view of self and world, then materials can be used to stretch out to the world. An important aspect of this expanding repertoire...is the sensory dimension to children's responses to materials. For it is the sensory dimension that first gives life and meaning to visual images (Burton 1996, p.36).

Throughout their artistic growth and development, children are learning to communicate with their own voices, skills, intentions, systems of organization, knowledge of materials, and personal imagery to reflect upon and communicate their growing experiences of their world.

During a keynote address at the 1997 National Conference, "Teaching for Intelligence," Eisner presented the concept of art-making as the process of "engaged arting." He asked his audience to penetrate the behaviors of art-making to try to discover the cognitive demands of such a process while asking us to

consider that art touches our most soulful nature, our emotions, our dreaming, our thinking, and our imagining. He articulated a progression that began with sensory perception and the opening of our capabilities of seeing and imagining. The art maker then engages in a process of manipulating and composing with a selected medium. Composing, he described, was basically the putting together of forms in relationship and generating a sense of unity and coherence. During this process of “arting” the artist initiates an open-ended conversation with the work involving improvisation, spontaneity, and the opportunity of discovery, constantly being open to surprises and the unplanned; purpose may shift as may intention as the process continues. This is not a logical sequential act but an ongoing movement and flow of transformation and possibility. The media becomes a medium of mediation between cognition, feeling, and spirit offering constraints and expressive opportunities. Throughout this “arting” the artist becomes awakened from habituated consciousness and the opened imagination pursues a vision-of-the-possible. This process “liberates us from the habits and assumptions of conventions. At best, the arts invite questions and opportunities to explore the edges and most interior parts of our experience. We are remade a little at a time during the process of making art” (Eisner 1997).

Let us join arting with children’s art-making behaviors and processes. First, let me emphasize that every child is a unique individual with unique characteristics, experiences, interests, and potentials. Each child develops as uniquely in art-making as in other domains of learning. Since art-making is a means for children to express and communicate their ideas, emotions, sensory perceptions, and experiences through personal symbols, their art-making is highly idiosyncratic (Lowenfeld 1957, Hurwitz and Day 1995, and Burton 1983). However, children’s general art-making behaviors, interests, and capabilities reflect the typical behaviors, interests, and capabilities of other children of similar age and culture. The development or evolution of their imagery also shares fascinating universal qualities in terms of the successive progression of seemingly random mark-making into individuated symbolic forms and in the general characteristics of the symbolic forms developed. Rhoda Kellogg has provided researchers with an extensive documented collection of young children’s art from around the world consisting of over half a million drawings. These drawings are filed in the Rhoda Kellogg Child Art Collection. Herbert Read provides a concise introduction to her work.

It has been shown by several investigators, but most effectively by Ms. Rhoda Kellogg of San Francisco, that the expressive gestures of the infant from the moment that they can be recorded by a crayon or pencil, evolve from certain basic scribbles towards consistent symbols. Over several years of development such basic patterns gradually become the conscious representation of objects perceived. Scientists may object that the analysis of this process has not been carried far enough to justify a generalization, but we have an hypothesis that should hold the field until it has been proved to be false. According to this hypothesis every child, in its discovery of a mode of symbolization, follows the same graphic evolution...I merely want you to observe that it is universal and is found, not only in the scribbles of young children but everywhere where the making of signs has had a symbolizing purpose—which is from the Neolithic Age onwards (Read 1963, p. 4, cited by Kellogg 1969, p. 2).

Researchers in the field of art education have described four fundamental artistic developmental stages. The designation of these stages and the descriptions of these stages that I present represent a synthesis of research and documentation by Lowenfeld (1952), Hurwitz and Day (1995), Smith (1983), Kellogg (1970), and Burton (1983). They present the following four main stages: manipulative (2–6 years old), symbol-making (4–11 years old), preadolescent (9–14 years old) and adolescent (13–18 years old). (These stages may also be referred to as Scribbling and/or Preschematic, Schematic, Dawning Realism and Preadolescent, and Adolescent).

Burton (1983) emphasizes that artistic development is inextricably interwoven with cognitive development and cognitive development may be profoundly influenced by artistic development. In addition to this universal yet individualized development of graphic symbols, the broad characteristics of the cognitive developmental stages described by Piaget are also observed in children's art forms and in their understanding about art. The emotional content of their work, choices of subject and themes, responses to materials and processes, and conceptual relationships reflect a general pattern of artistic developmental growth that parallel Piaget's four basic stages of cognitive development: sensory-motor, pre-operational, concrete operational, and formal operational. (Gardner 1980, Burton 1983, Smith 1983, and Kellogg 1970). Biological development and our cultural development dialectically interlace with our cognitive development (Vygotsky 1978); so, too, they dialectically interlace with our artistic development. These stages of artistic development provide a general framework for observation rather than rigid and finite categories. There is no specific demarcation point when one stage ends and another begins. Not only do these stages vary in timing with individual children, children also fluidly move in between and across stages. Children's artistic development is not an orderly linear progression but rather an ascending spiral

with dips and swoops—like the flight of a falcon playing with a current of wind....Although I personally describe children's artistic growth and development as an ascending spiral, I will continue to use documented stage theory designations for purposes of clarity and consistency.

Manipulative Stage

First graders may be in the manipulative or symbol-making stage. During the manipulative stage, children experiment with making marks. This seemingly random mark-making is influenced by the child's use of large muscle groups. Marks tend to be made with the whole arm, not the fingers, thus enhancing the sensory quality of the experience and stimulating circular, rhythmic patterns of movement. This stage may be divided into three phases: random mark-making, controlled mark-making, and enclosure-making/deliberate placement/and naming (Lowenfeld and Brittain 1982, and Hurwitz and Day 1995). When the child makes random marks, she learns about the different kinds and qualities of marks or lines (thick, thin, wavy, straight, jumpy, fast, slow, straight), textures (soft, fuzzy, shiny, smooth), and shapes (also considered as patches of stuff) that are possible to form. These marks are repeated and varied in many different combinations, which form the foundation of the child's visual vocabulary similar to the development of a sound repertoire needed before words can be formed.

The paper is perceived as a flat, continuous surface upon which marks can be put. Marks are first put anywhere on the paper and later are put in selected places as the paper becomes a divisible surface with boundaries. After much practice and exploration, the child is able to make controlled marks and knows that specific movements correlate with specific kinds of marks. Lines anywhere become lines in a place, become lines and marks and patches of stuff in a place, become stuff in an enclosed place, and finally become selectively grouped places that divide the paper into areas. Concepts of arrangement and interrelationships between marks are being learned and developed. Often, at this point in development, the child will begin naming her marks and arrangements after they have been created. This rudimentary naming indicates the emergence of awareness that *marks can convey meanings!* During the later phase of this stage, the enclosure appears: a circular bounded shape surrounding other shapes and marks, which seems to indicate an inside-outside place such as the home, or even being held and wanted. Some researchers refer to the enclosure as a universal mandala (Kellogg 1970, Burton 1983, Lowenfeld 1957, and Smith 1983). Kellogg's research in

particular documents a detailed progression of graphic development that begins with a repertoire of twenty basic scribbles and slowly develops into shape combines, to aggregates of shape and line, to sun-like signs, to radial configurations, to mandala configurations, to human person gestalts. During this period, color is not representationally significant, although there may be individual affective responses and awareness of different colors.

as the child now organizes these things and brings them into a harmonious relationship he engages in one important thing—he brings his thinking, his feeling, his seeing into some relationship as he draws... To bring back what they produce into a harmonious relationship to the area of the paper and in relationship to the subject matter which they represent is also an important factor in the creative process. We call this growth component which relates to this harmonious relationship, aesthetic growth. Aesthetic growth takes place when we move from chaos to better organization. Whenever we improve organization we engage in aesthetic growth, but especially when we bring into relationship not just one part of our personality, but our total personality; that is, our thinking, the intellect; our feeling, the emotions; and our perceiving whatever it may be—touching, seeing, or moving; that means also moving the pencil on the paper...This is establishing a coordination, and any coordination leads toward better and more harmonious relationships. The more sensitive we become to details in movement or in coordination, the more we control our creative medium...This is also part of aesthetic growth...Aesthetic experiences are greatly related to this harmonious feeling within our own Selves...(Lowenfeld 1958, pp 29-30).

The child is visually learning about the sensory and perceptual qualities of line, shape, texture, and organization. Lowenfeld consistently reminds us that this nurturing of the development of sensory and perceptual sensitivity is one of our fundamental concerns in the teaching of art (Lowenfeld 1958). Furthermore, the child is considering relationships of order and comparison while learning expressively that through the connection of action and material, a mark can be made and that these marks can communicate feelings, ideas, personal experiences, and stories. Children name their expressions, thus implying an awareness that the image holds their experience and conveys meaning! Kellogg reminds us that mark configurations also provide aesthetic pleasure and satisfaction, for inherent in these configurations are gestalts of balance, rhythm, pattern, proportion, and shaping (Kellogg 1980, Lowenfeld 1958, Hurwitz and Day 1995, Burton 1983, and Smith 1983).

Many researchers and art teachers refer to this phase of artistic development as the Scribbling stage. I try and discourage such usage, believing that the word “scribble” implies non-intentional, thoughtless, meaningless, and careless mark-making. My experience with parents and teachers further

indicates that the critically important learning being developed during this time is largely misunderstood and devalued. One of my student teachers documented in her journal this past fall the first art classes for the first graders. She wrote how the teacher had begun by telling the children that now they were first graders! Being first graders meant that they had to stop making scribble drawings and learn to draw the right way. They learned how to make a rainbow, a cloud, and a happy face—all secondhand stereotypic formulas generated by adult others. I recall my landlady during my graduate studies. She had a B.A. degree in art history and was very supportive of her children's artistic growth and development. She proudly shared with me a three-ring notebook full of her five-year-old's drawings. The notebook was completely filled with coloring book exercises—skillfully colored with precision and attention to small details. I admired the coloring and asked if she perhaps made any other kind of art—personal and original art? Any paintings from school? Behind the refrigerator there was a pile of 18x24 fantastic personal paintings. We spent the afternoon together in deep discussion.

I have a special slide of another five-year-old's painting—a momento of my teaching at Summer Center—that I share with my university students. The painting is on 18x24 paper and was painted at an easel. The painting looks like huge swirls of deep blue paint painted with a big, fat brush. These big blue swirls cover almost the entire paper. There is a little patch of open space showing the white of the paper in the lower right quartile of the painting. Inside this little patch of white space are some scratchy, jagged black lines made with a smaller brush. The little boy who painted this picture had been painting for almost thirty minutes and had just finished when his Dad came to pick him up. I quickly went to meet his Dad and told him how special this painting was to his son. Dad peered quizzically over my shoulder seeing the “scribble” and wondering if I had lost my mind. I suggested that he ask his son to tell him about the painting. This Dad did. We both heard a very vivid story: remember when we went to the beach last Saturday and the ocean was out and we walked and walked and got really wet and tried to catch fish and we got a crab and then we had lunch and...the story continued and ended with “and this is the crab in the blue bucket I brought to school today!” These images are full of care, attention, thoughtfulness, and meaning. This “scribble” represented not only the blue bucket with the crab but the whole story of his day with his father.

Early Symbol-Making

The second stage of children's artistic growth and development is termed the symbol-making or

schematic stage. As the name implies, children are engaged in the creation, invention, and development of their own personal symbols. The child is usually between the ages of five and eleven years old during the symbol-making stage. This stage is also commonly subdivided into three phases. Early symbol-making follows and builds upon the manipulative explorations and the acquired repertoire of mark-making knowledge and experience. This phase is characterized by the emergence of named expressions and story telling after the image has been produced. This indicates a new ability, that of *making meaning by the invention and manipulation of symbols*. At this point, the symbol images produced are general and undifferentiated—a gestalt of sensory perception and responding. A circle with rays and dots inside may represent an entire person—actually people or the qualities of personness—and another smaller circle with more sticks coming out may represent animals—a cow and a dog could be imaged in a similar fashion because they are both four legged animals. Such symbolization presents an interesting parallel in language development. One-word utterances often represent complete thoughts that would later be expressed in sentences. The word represents the whole thought, not only the literal meaning of the word (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). The child is NOT producing visual replicas or “pictures-of.” The child is re-presenting sensory perceptions that are translated into personal symbols—an incredibly powerful and complex metaphorical act (Kellogg 1970, Burton 1983, Smith 1983, and Lowenfeld and Brittain 1982).

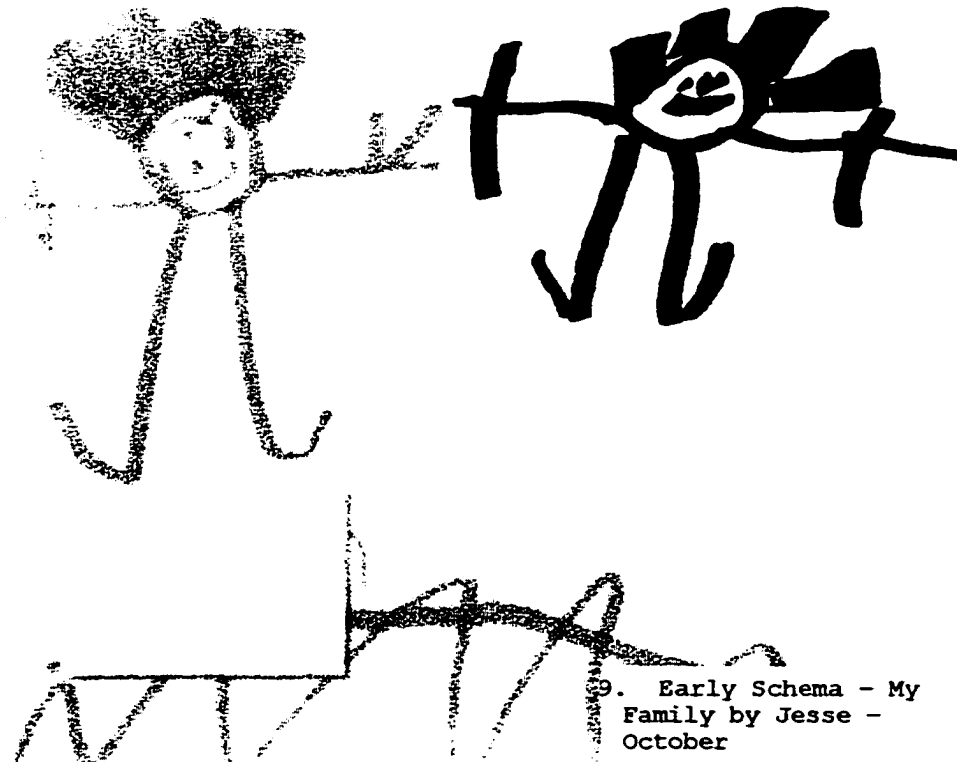
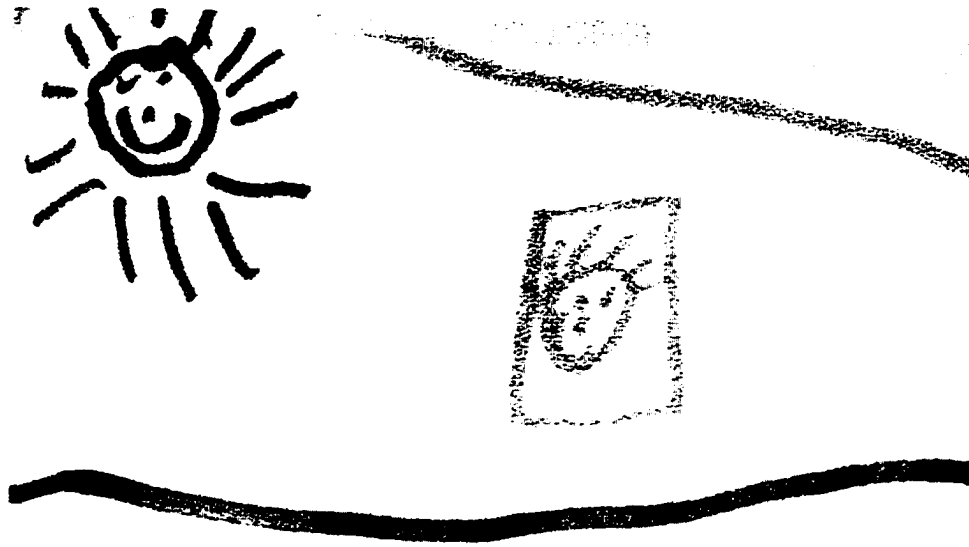
...children do not strive for representation; they are much more symbolists than naturalists and are in no way concerned with complete and exact similarity... A child's memory does not yield a simple depiction of representational images at this age... We see that when a child unburdens his repository of memory in drawing, he does so in the mode of speech—telling a story. A major feature of this mode is a certain degree of abstraction, which any verbal representation necessarily entails. Thus we see that drawing is graphic speech that arises on the basis of verbal speech. The schemes that distinguish children's first drawings are reminiscent in this sense of verbal concepts that communicate only the essential features of objects. This gives us grounds for regarding children's drawings as a preliminary stage in the development of written language (Vygotsky 1978, p. 112-3).

These first symbols are also fluid and changing due to a constant flow of sensory responding and associating as more and more marks are added to the developing image. What begins as a butterfly may end up as a lion or a tree or a dinosaur. Subjects are usually of the “I, me, and my” categories—subject matter of most significance and meaning in the child's world. Images contain a gestalt of experience rather than being representational images. Paper is still a continuous surface. Size and color are indicative of feelings and importance. Space is places on the paper. Children are making connections between responses to their

world and responses to materials: shaping metaphorical concepts through materials and telling their stories (Lowenfeld 1958, Burton 1983, Smith 1983, and Hurwitz and Day 1995). I have often described this symbol-making process as children's personal inventing of their own pictographic language. Symbol-making, according to Burton (1983), involves two main actions: 1) sensory responses to materials and 2) the internalization of images, thoughts, and perceptions about the world. The child often develops one basic schema or symbol for various subjects, which is later elaborated with details and variations to meet new needs of differentiation and to respond to ongoing sensory-perceptual refinement. Subject interests seem to be similar across many cultures: people, houses, animals, and modes of transportation—all components of the child's immediate environment and experience (Burton 1983 and Hurwitz and Day 1995). Gardner (1980) suggests that the child needs to be able to invent graphic equivalents for the subjects and categories that occupy his or her thought processes.

Earlier symbols were often based on sensory impressions...The sensory impressions were charged with personal emotions and quite idiosyncratic. By contrast, later symbols take into account how items are conceptually similar to and different from others...the symbols in their paintings represent the largest possible class to which each object might belong...Children repeat their basic category symbols many times, gaining control and competence at representing their experiences. In time they start to include more information in their representations and to paint more specific sub-category symbols...a child's choice of which attributes or details to include depends on two factors. First, the choice rests on which attributes the child considers to be necessary...Second, the choice rests on which attributes lend themselves more easily to representation within the child's graphic means...the task of representation is to select and match up characteristics of experience with characteristics of the medium (Smith 1983, pp. 57, 59).

As symbols become more detailed, differentiated, and specific, we move into the middle phase of symbol-making. We can observe very idiosyncratic people symbols that become elaborately detailed while remaining schematic rather than naturalistic. These symbols now include the head, torso, limbs, hands, feet, and clothing. The symbol configuration will remain basically unchanged although they will now include detail addition and attempt to show movement. Color most often will match actual physical color attributes. Another characteristic that emerges is the use of a baseline. The bottom of the page concretely



9. Early Schema - My
Family by Jesse -
October

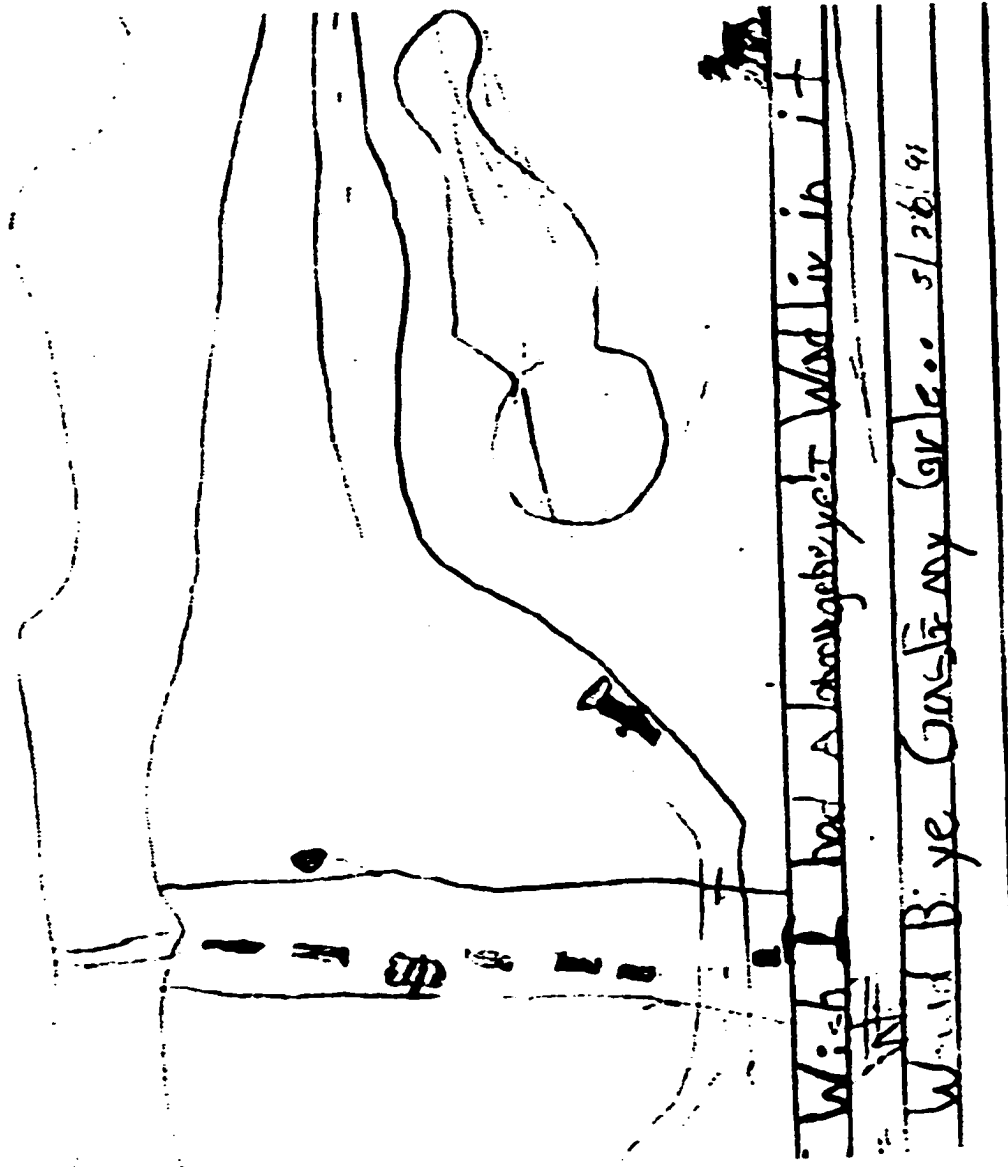


10. Early Schema - Me and
Brian making patterns by
Jesse - September



11. Symbol making -
My three friends by
Kerri - November





13. Symbol making - I wish I had a Lamborghini by Kyle - November

represents the ground and subject matter will be anchored to this ground line. The sky is often created as a blue strip at the top of the paper with seemingly empty space in between the sky and the ground. This empty space is the air. Images will be arranged in relation to one another and children will devise unique means of re-presenting a three-dimensional world on a two-dimensional surface. X-ray drawings will show what we know but do not see—inside and outside; multiple viewpoints will combine bird's eye viewing with eye level viewing or ant's eye viewing in the same image, multiple baselines will be used if the one is not enough, and scenes such as eating at the dining room table or bicycling down my street may well look like fold over images ready to cut and pop up. Children explore the possibilities of overlapping and changing sizes to show distances. This is a time of individual exploration unbound by conventions. Thematic interest revolves around the children's personal world with a high degree of ever more complex narrative content. Children need to be able to make sense of the multiple forces at interplay in their world; the diverse forces of the environment, personal relationships, events of the outside world, and responses to story viewed and experienced through mass media, book, and spoken word. Gardner (1980) emphasizes the complex perennial struggle between good and evil presented to the child every day.

He/she must come to grips with their meaning, make peace, if at all possible, with the various potent sources and forces in his/her environment, such as "settling" and "understanding" activity is most likely to take place with those characters and forces that have already made a strong impression on him/her, are becoming increasingly familiar, and are slowly yielding their meanings...In an earlier day, fairy tales fit this bill; in an even earlier epoch myths....Now it is the characters conveyed by mass media...Such an exploration may take several forms: The child may speak, sing, dream, or cry about them. But for youngsters four to seven years of age, the graphic media present a uniquely rich, flexible, and personal means for exploring the depths of interpersonal relations and personal feelings (Gardner 1980, p. 114).

Although images remain schematic, Smith (1983) proposes that this is primarily due to drawing from memory. As children are given the opportunity to draw from observation, their images will begin to display naturalistic characteristics, details, and direct sensory responsivity. My own work with children confirms Smith's proposal. When given the opportunity to observe, touch, and interact directly with subject matter, children's schematic imagery will change. However, this does not necessarily mean more realistic in the adult sense. This does mean the inclusion of more carefully observed and responded to sensory-emotional attributes and details.

Story: Trees

A very common schematic symbol children use in their drawings is the tree. This tree tends to be represented by two parallel lines for the trunk and a circular shape on top: the lollipop tree. Our first graders had been studying fall weather and attributes of this season and life cycles. Living in rural New Hampshire, trees and foliage are dominant phenomenon in our everyday environment—as present as in the school playground and view from our classroom window. Early in October we went outside to observe the magnificent old maple trees. We circled the trunk of one of the largest trees with our bodies. We closed our eyes and felt the bark. We looked closely for colors in the bark. The children discovered gray, blue, purple, pink, and silver—no brown. We looked up from the bottom to the top of the highest branches. The children observed how the branches grew smaller and thinner. As we traveled through the playground the children observed different kinds of trees with different kinds of sensory qualities. They further observed how the wind made the branches move and made a swooshing noise.

Indoors again, we dramatized being trees from our roots to our trunk to our bark tour branches to our twigs to our leaves...the following day, Wendy took the children outside with drawing paper and pencils. The children sat down under their chosen tree and drew. Each drawing was completely different—responding to different salient sensory aspects of the trees, the weather, and qualities of marks the pencils could make [see samples]. We did this many, many times throughout the year with many different subjects inside and outside of the classroom. Our goal was not the development of more realistic drawings but the sensory-perceptual enrichment and observational enrichment of the children as they connected conceptual information about trees with observational experience and further enhanced their descriptive picture-painting vocabulary both visually and verbally.

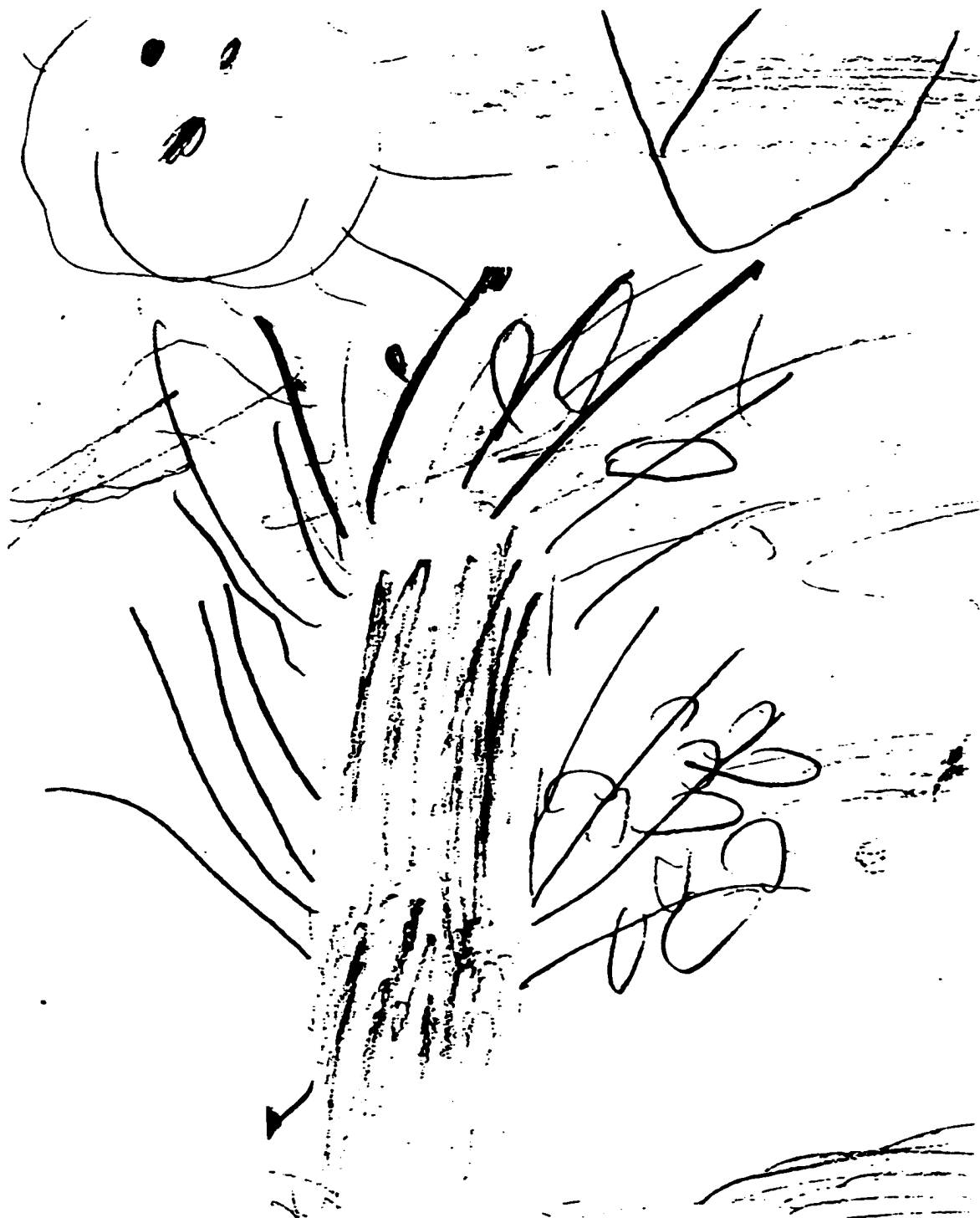
We ought to talk less and draw more. I personally should like to remove speech altogether and communicate everything I have to say in sketches. My poor little bit of sketching is priceless to me; it helped my conception of material things; one's mind rises more quickly to general ideas, if one looks at objects more closely (Goethe quoted by Hjerter 1986, p.16, quoted by Olson 1998, p.174).

Late Symbol-Making

Late symbol-making brings planned representations based upon interactive events and complex narratives involving simultaneous time sequencing. Subject matter shifts slightly from the self and



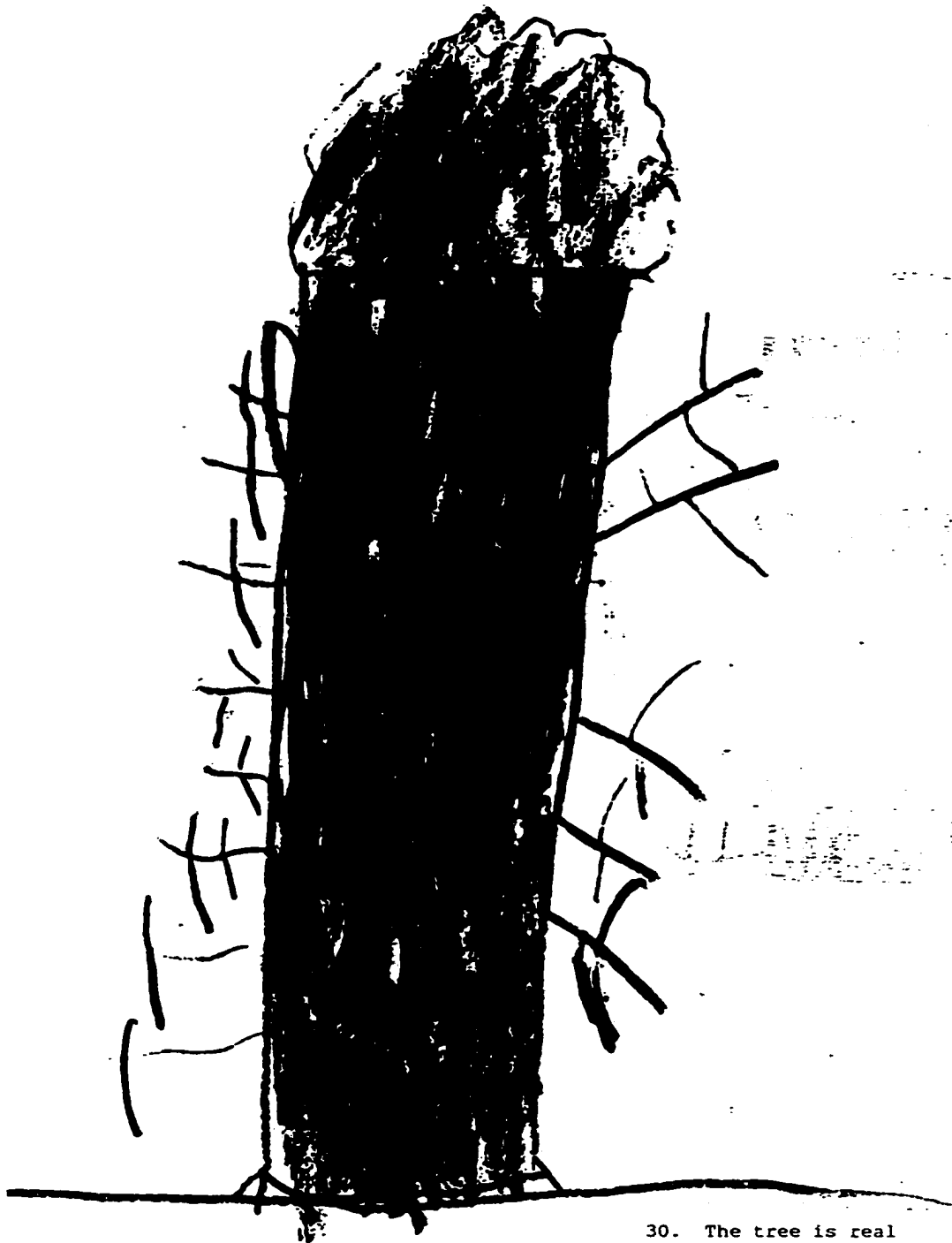
28. The tree with a
long branch by Terry
- October



29. Tree with wind in
the branches by Kerri
- October



31. The sky is full
of wind by David -
October



30. The tree is real
tall and has pattern
branches by Brian -
October

immediate environment to the exterior world of events and happenings and social relationships. The child has a growing curiosity in what others do, in questions of how and what and why. Image stories develop based not only upon personal experiences but also upon vicarious and imaginary experiences with different narrative voices. Story subjects expand upon universal existential concerns: themes of quests, trials, contests, conflicts, survival, bonding, creation, destruction, good versus evil, or death. Within these narratives, time and space may be simultaneous—sequences of events may occur at the same time and may occur in two or more places at the same time in the same image (Burton 1983 and Smith 1983). Schema have become quite elaborate and the children's solutions for depicting distances may include horizon lines, the use of diagonals, size variation, placement, and even change in application of details and color brightness. We may observe in their images:

causal connections between objects, individual objects, and an environment specific to the event depicted. Some paintings should reveal an interest in the relationship of the self to the immediate society and some to societies of other times and places. Some paintings will not include the self at all, as the child is able to relate to more distant objects and events...Children should be conscious that they are deliberately planning to make a finished and whole painting...they should know they can make deliberate choices according to their own ideas about the subject and about the painting (Smith 1983, p.82).

Most significantly by this time, if their images are displaying these characteristics, children have developed a dynamic and extensive visual repertoire of schematic imagery and knowledge of media and manipulations. This repertoire or schematic vocabulary with elaborate details and variations, which indicate the child's awareness of self, other, and world, can be used to reflect upon, engage, and express their heartfelt encounters with the world. As we provide sensitive opportunities to nurture our children's artistic growth and development, so, too, we give, as London (1989) expresses, the opportunity to pick up a lump of clay and squeeze life-force into it, to be in awe of our own creative self, and to engage in the act of creation and meaning-making.

Development does not stop here but journeys onward. Since my scholarship at this time centers on five-to seven-year-old children in the first grade, and since concerns of space and time impact my text, I will pause here with you instead of continuing on and describing the more complete and comprehensive artistic developmental journey of children from this time of symbolization through the following stages of dawning realism/preadolescence and adolescence. For those inclined to pursue study of children's artistic growth and

development, I highly recommend the works of Lowenfeld, Burton, Smith, Gardner, and Kellogg, which I have referred to throughout this discussion.

Meaning and Narrative in Children's Artistic Development

Nancy Smith (1983) describes this developmental process of visual symbolization as the development of the ability to represent metaphorically complex life experiences through visual symbols. Meaning is conveyed through symbol images, the expressive qualities of the visual-graphic elements, and the compositional arrangements and compositional combinations themselves. During her research in elementary children's art-making, she observed three strands of meaning woven into their images: narrative, emotional, and compositional.

...There is a narrative strand. What is the idea of story being presented? This strand is present whether the painting is objective or non-objective...There is an emotional strand: what feelings are being communicated by the visual-graphic elements? And there is a compositional strand: What sort of visual interest and unity are created by the arrangement of graphic elements? The overall organization should weave each of these strands into a unified whole and convey a clear meaning... Their images do convey emotions, do strive for unity. In fact, their capacity to integrate the narrative, emotional, and compositional aspects of a painting surpasses that of most adults since these strands have not yet become separated for them (Smith 1983, p.11).

The narrative strand is a story. Many pictures or designs created by children actually re-present a whole personal story either directly experienced, vicariously experienced, or imagined. The picture holds the story and allows for reflection and communication of this whole experience accompanied by richly descriptive sensory details. The image also holds the memory while supporting the narrative voice of the child. Perhaps as Olsen (1998) suggests one of the most important purposes of art is to tell a story—to be able to share one's interests and concerns, to share our personal view of the world, our joys, our sorrows, and to be able to touch the lives of one another through the sharing of our stories—finding our uniqueness and our common humanity. Story is a natural way to communicate our thoughts, insights, feelings, and experiences to one another. Human beings are natural storytellers. Across time and culture, the telling and sharing of stories has remained an important way for all people to reflect upon, to order and organize, and to make sense of our life experiences. Stories help us to understand ourselves and our relationships to others (Olson 1998, Lourde 1991, Witherall 1991 and Cole 1989). Stories are critically important means through which we learn and come to know our world.

“Children use narratives to shape and reshape their lives, imagining what could or should have happened as well as what did happen” (Dyson and Genishi 1990, p.2, cited by Olson 1998, p. 165). Olson emphasizes how narrative in children’s art is an important way for them to understand themselves and their world better; a means through which they can symbolically express their thoughts, emotions, needs, and desires. For example, Julie, a member of our first-grade class, was six years old. She had already had three different father figures in her life and had moved from home to home many times. She had one older sister at university. As we shared art together, especially drawings and collages, Wendy and I both noticed a recurring image of a beautiful house with a garden, a yard with trees, pets, views from inside and outside...a sense of a family home—the family home she wanted so badly. During the spring, her mother remarried and she and Julie moved into their new home. Julie drew only a few pictures of this new home and stopped. Once she actually had this home in her real life it was no longer necessary to project her fantasy of a home in her drawings.

She could not express this need and desire with words but she could with images. If one understands that one form of expression can effectively inform the other, it becomes increasingly clear and essential that teachers should nurture and encourage learning through the use of both verbal and visual languages in all classrooms. ...verbal and visual languages enables many students to perform at a much higher level of visual and verbal literacy (Olson 1992, Fountas and Olson 1996). Without the benefit of both languages for expression, students do not have the full opportunity to realize their full potential as artists, writers, and learners (Olson 1998, p. 179).

Children each have many stories that, as Coles (1989) suggests, are begging to be told. How often do we provide the opportunities for such storytelling in schools? As we tell our own stories we also begin to develop our own voice, and as we listen to the stories of others we begin to hear their voices, too. Cooper (1991) discusses the finding of one’s voice as an experience of transformation, freedom, and empowerment that enables the individual to become fully present to themselves. This fullness of presence could be part of the state of grace and harmony articulated by Noddings (1984) in her description of self and care. Cooper (1991) describes the true voice of self as being the voice of one’s heart—just as Rogers (1998) describes voice as the courage to tell one’s heart. Cooper (1991) differentiates this true voice from our constructed voice. The constructed voice is our common cultural voice that too often externally locates our sense of self and may slowly erode our true inner voice. She calls for an integration rather than a separation of these voices and believes that the healing qualities of telling our own stories can help us to become more whole

and more ourselves.

Storytelling as described by most of these authors is primarily facilitated through writing. I join with Olson in a call for the opportunity to tell our stories through multiple forms of representation and, of course, through images. Given such choices, children who are not facile, not confident, and who are highly challenged with verbal and written language can have the opportunity to tell their stories, to participate in community storytelling, and to develop their voices fully and wholeheartedly. As these multiple forms of story are told, we also begin to expand our horizons of understanding, care, and relationship. We enter into intimate intra- and interpersonal dialogues with our selves and with one another. Witherall (1991) emphasizes her commitment to such a dialogue as a means of nurturing imagination and ethical concern and of guarding against isolation and detachment.

Witherall creates a triad of care, imagination, and dialogue. These become the threads that weave a tapestry (and tapestries traditionally tell visual stories) of relationship and interconnectedness. Imagination and dialogue become the warp and weft thread upon the emerging image of care. Imagination engages reflection and empathetic projection (Lowenfeld 1982 and Witherall 1991). Dialogue provides for the negotiation of meanings. Witherall further emphasizes that a caring relationship requires dialogue just as true dialogue requires a caring relationship to emerge and develop. Witherall's dialogue is one of words accompanied by the gestures of body language, silences, touch, and eye contact. Listening and participating in such a dialogue will require engaged attention and heightening of mutual awarenesses. I again propose the need of weaving images and visual stories into this dialogue.

Two Stories: Care and Self-Portraits

We are at Gilford. It is September. We are sitting in our morning circle discussing what will be happening today. The school schedule is still new as are daily special classes. Today is gym. As I participate and observe, scanning the circle of faces and listening to the discussion, I notice that Amy is suddenly tense and directs her eyes to me and then to Julie who is sitting next to me. Her eyes signal concern. She has noticed that Julie has begun to cry quietly. As I give my attention and care to Julie, I feel Amy's eyes upon us. Julie tells me that her mom has forgotten her sneakers. The circle discussion



148. My Soul by Kyle
October



33. My face can be
blue too by Amy -
October

continues but Amy's attention is on Julie. When Julie snuggles into my lap and gives me a teary smile, Amy smiles, too, and returns to the circle. At this early point in time, the children are not finely attentive to one another but Amy is already demonstrating clearly this ability to dialogue with care using a language of gesture and eye.

October. Gilford. We have been painting self-portraits following a discussion concerning how we each are special. The children have been exploring paint and brushstrokes and color mixing. The children's images are highly schematic and this is a challenge to re-present some of the qualities of our faces. The children share paints and water. They also fall in love with mixing colors and the new black paint! They share their color discoveries and palettes. Kyle has been painting vigorously for about forty-five minutes. He has extreme difficulty with writing—even the holding of a pencil is a challenge for his coordination. His letters are large and awkwardly formed. He needs to lie on his stomach or use an inclined plane in order to help his writing. When he draws he grips the pencil so tightly it seems painful to me. Yet when he draws, extraordinary details and visual-sensory observing is manifested. And every drawing unlocks a story for him. Today Kyle shares the story in his self-portrait with a circle of children around us.

He tells me that this—referring to the large head surrounded by blues strokes—“is my soul going to heaven. I am dead. This is my body—on the bed—see? And this is the wolf that bit me. I put red on his nose. It's my blood.” I realize that there has been a rabies outbreak in this region and there have been danger warnings for rabid foxes and raccoons pervading all the local news and information resources. Kyle has held the fear that he will be bitten and will die. This worry has been so deep that it is manifested through this painting and was finally expressed. Interestingly, the other children did not have this worry. They connected with the concept of Kyle's soul and wanted to know what a soul was. Wendy decided to have a circle discussion due to the depth of their concern and interest and the sensitivity of the question. She engaged the children in a dialogue concerning the soul and the different kinds of beliefs our families have, giving the children the opportunity to voice their beliefs and their questions—all inspired by Kyle's telling of his heartfelt visual story. We were able, as Witherall describes, to find our lives in the lives of others.

The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories have come to you, take care of them and learn to give them away when needed. Sometimes a person needs a good story more than food to stay alive.

That's why we put stories in one another's memory. This is how people care for themselves (Barry Lopez from Crow and Weasel).

This transformative process of making art, as previously described, physically begins with the direct interaction between the individual and the media. This interaction is the key relationship for the development of symbols and expressive metaphors. We consider how a brushstroke is like the wind, how a color echoes a sound, how the surface of a slab of clay is like the petal of a flower, how a curving mark is like the sweeping movement of a butterfly... These sensory responses connect to the artist's feelings, memories, experiences, ideas, dreams, intuitions, and layers of consciousness and, as they connect, lead towards reflection, intentionality of expression, and meaning. Artistic devices are selected as the journey or process of creating ebbs and flows and the image-creation takes form and presence and is presented (Eisner 1997, Lowenfeld 1958, and Burton 1983). The work of art then EMBODIES and presents a whole expression of experience containing deep symbolic meaning and significance that is articulated in the whole presence. This whole presence presents many layers and connotations and connections to meaning for each beholder. As such, the image is not merely an image but a complex metaphorical path to more reflection, to a higher level of consciousness, and more meaning (Langer 1957 and London 1989).

Children (and adults) need internal purpose for artistic expression and for all deep growing and learning (London 1992 and Vygotsky 1978).

Reading and writing must be something the child needs. Here we have the basic contradiction that appears in the teaching of writing...namely, that writing is taught as a motorskill and not as a complex cultural activity...writing must be "relevant to life"...writing should be meaningful for children, an intrinsic need should be aroused in them, and that writing should be incorporated into a task that is necessary and relevant for life. Only then can we be certain that it develop not as a matter of hand and finger habits but as a really new and complex form of speech (Vygotsky 1978, p.115).

This need for relevancy and meaning applies, I believe, to the learning of all forms of representation. As we support meaning, we also support the inner voice of the child, which, in the visual arts, will be manifested by idiosyncratic image and symbol development, with choices of media, and expression of personal narratives and responses to experience. We must also be careful to support the emerging expressive voices of each individual child and not to impose upon them the artistic styles of others. How can we impose someone else's expression upon this emerging voice and then even further diminish this voice by

demanding that it say something unimportant? Is this not another form of privileging and marginalizing: imposing a univocal voice rather than a dialogue of multiple voices and multiple language forms? As Friere and Vygotsky emphatically state, the power of language is generative. It is our tool with which to generate meaning and meanings, to mediate activity and to make culture (Macedo 1987).

Social Settings and Polyphonous Dialogue

Our capacity for the development of language can only occur in a social setting (Vygotsky 1978, Werstch 1991, Bakhtin 1993). Werscht (1991) describes his understanding of three basic components of human development shared by Bakhtin and Vygotsky: firstly, the assertion that to understand human mental action we must also understand the semiotic devices used to mediate such action; secondly, the assumption that certain aspects of our mental functioning are directly linked to communicative processes; and thirdly, the use of the term voice to indicate that all psychological processes involve human communicative processes.

“...the social dimension of consciousness is primary in time and in fact. The individual dimension of consciousness is derivative and secondary” (Vygotsky 1979, p.30). In this context, then, the term “voice” serves as a constant reminder that mental functioning in the individual originates in social, communicative processes...human communicative processes are characterized by a dialogicality of voices: when a speaker produces an utterance, at least 2 voices can be heard simultaneously...I have chosen to speak of “voices” rather than voice because I believe that there are multiple ways of representing reality in approaching a problem. The Bakhtinian focus on dialogicality presupposes more than one voice. In addition, the notion of “heterogeneity” in thinking (Tulviste 1986, pp. 87, 89), contrasts with the assumption of the implicit and often ethnocentric, that there is one way, or that there is an obvious, best way to represent the objects or events in a situation (Werscht 1991, pp. 12-14).

Vygotsky was highly influenced by Marx’s theory of historical materialism, which emphasizes that historical changes in society and material life will effect changes in human nature or, as Vygotsky interprets, our consciousness and our behavior. “He believed that the internalization of culturally produced sign systems {the tools of language} brings about behavioral transformations and forms the bridge between early and later forms of individual development. Thus for Vygotsky, in the tradition of Marx and Engels, the mechanism of individual developmental change is rooted in society and culture (Cole and Scribner 1978, p. 7). As such, human development is relational. Social context, our interactions, and our relationships with other human beings play a critical role in the development of our consciousness, our behaviors, and our

cognitive processes.

The mechanism of social behavior and the mechanism of consciousness are the same... We are aware of ourselves, for we are aware of others, and in the same way we know others; and this is as it is because in relation to ourselves we are in the same position as others to us (Vygotsky 1979, p.1, quoted by Dixon Krauss 1996, p. 78).

According to Dixon Krauss (1996), Vygotsky believed in the social origin of psychological ideas. She describes the interrelationship of external social and internal cognitive processes using Vygotsky's term "zone of proximal development." This zone refers to the child's present level of functioning and understanding and her potential performance level based upon challenge, help, and guidance. Since language is our means of communication and a tool for mediating thinking, inter- and intrapersonal dialogue are the tools for the construction of meaning and for our ongoing growth and development. Werscht (1991) describes Vygotsky's research as primarily being involved with dyadic relationships between teacher and student or pairs of students and calls for the extension of the research dyad to a broader socio-cultural system. Dixon Krauss (1996) extends this dyad to collaborative groups of children in schools. She emphasizes that the backbone of Vygotsky's theory is collaboration and cooperation.

The classroom becomes a community of learners in which children are engaged in activities that facilitate the development of all elements of communication (reading, writing, talking, and listening). Therefore children should be given the opportunity to work comfortably with a wide range of children in order to acquire social and cognitive skills in playing, working, and learning (Dixon Krauss 1996, p.79).

The key here is heterogeneous groupings and not homogenous. Multivoiced dialogue and peer guidance need many levels and kinds of capabilities that will be shared and discussed. Heterogeneous collaborative learning should involve all members as dynamic participators and should inspire collaborative dialogue and the respecting of multiple voices and possibilities. Such interactions "require a holistic and meaningful search for knowledge in which everyone has an active part" (Dixon Krauss 1991, p. 78).

Art-making is most often considered as an individualistic act practiced in relative isolation from others—within the artist's studio. However, in the context of schools art-making is practiced within a community of others—within the classroom studio. Within the studio of our Gilford first-grade classroom, space, media, and emerging ideas were all shared by the children in a synergistic flow of creating. The

children discussed possibilities, problem-solving strategies, ideas, and discoveries. They helped one another: catalyzing each other and respecting their individual artistry in an environment of care, trust, and multivoiced dialogue. Yes, the children created personal art works but they did so in an ongoing dialectic of ideation and cooperation. Yes, some children would sit apart at times due to their creative endeavor of the day, emotional needs of the day, or physiological needs. Quiet areas of choice included the upholstered rocking chair (our author-artist chair), under the easel on the rug, under Wendy's teacher's table, the quiet reading area, and the floor by the coat racks. Yet no matter what the location, children would visit one another as did Wendy and I. Everyone received attention. No one was separated from the community. After the creating and making, we would follow by sharing our images in circle discussion, small group discussions, or display. The walls, ceiling, and hallway were our galleries presenting an ongoing visual dialogue. Our classroom became known as "Mirrorland" due to the three sets of self-portraits and handprint friendship banners displayed on the ceiling. After running out of wall space, Wendy and I decided to use the ceiling to display the children's first self-portraits. When the children arrived the next morning we waited for them to take notice. Julie and Katlyn spied the portraits right away. Look-Look!!! Let's lie down and look!! It's us!!! We're on the ceiling! They were joined by the other children as they, too, arrived. We were all laying on the floor gazing up at our ceiling gallery of selves. "It's a mirrorland!" exclaimed Julie and the classroom was renamed. We were literally surrounded by one another's stories.

Engaged Dialogue

The fullest development of our use of language to generate meaning can only occur through engagement in dialogic action (Vygotsky 1978, Werscht 1991, Dixon Krauss 1991, and Friere and Macedo 1987). Such action is an active exchange of meanings from which new meanings can emerge.

Dialogic action depends on the awareness of oneself as a knower, an attitude Friere calls conscientization (*conscientizacao*). This critical consciousness is informed by a philosophically sound view of language and inspired by that unsentimental respect for human beings that only a sound philosophy of mind can ensure (Macedo 1987, p.xiii).

I hear in these words the need to develop one's sense of self and affirmation of self as a key component of dialogue. Finding, affirming, and loving one's true self generates the initial confidence to "speak out"—to

express one's self—to tell one's story. Within the classroom, this confidence is nurtured over time, as is an environment of care and community, which welcomes dialogue and does not seek to dominate, subvert, nor humiliate any voice. A shift in knowingness takes place. The all too dominant model of the teacher as the omniscient encyclopedia and font of all knowledge, and the conception of the student as the empty vessel transform into a shared co-construction of knowledge with mutual learning and multi-faceted dialogue guided and facilitated by the teacher (Brooks and Brooks 1993).

Friere and Macedo describe the possibilities of using language to develop our critical consciousness: our means of making choices that will bring about the awareness and the envisionment for transforming our world. They describe the capabilities of recognition and reinvention of reading the word and reading the world. Recognition begins with an act of perception: an apprehension of experience that entails deep looking and seeing accompanied by the creative exploration of possibilities of interpretation, the reconsideration of contexts, and careful naming that release the question of “what if?” “What if?” begins reinvention. Is this not being able to perceive deeply, to conceptualize one's experience of the world and to use multiple forms of symbolic expression without being limited by the imposition of fixed unmodifiable meanings? Is this not also a form of Eisner's arting, of Greene's aesthetic engagement, of Lowenfeld's creative process, of London's artful transformation? Pedagogically we must be so very careful not to subvert true dialogue into a univocal discourse of power, obedience, and acceptance. For as we do, we subvert the possibilities of exploring and generating new meanings with one another even as we close the door to the inner voice of self (Friere and Macedo 1987, and Werscht 1991). We wonder why and how a child's innate creativity and artistic voice can have become silenced and his or her creative confidence shattered. Language users need to be able to use languages in ways that can be sensitive to countless different contexts and situations of everyday life and that are sensitive to the individual's perspective, conceptual horizon, situatedness, intentions, and needs (Clark and Holquist 1984).

Could we instead provide the conditions that would provide children with something important to say about themselves and their world and give them a safe (empathetic and non-judgmental—caring and compassionate) environment in which to do so? Then, perhaps, the urgency to speak will guide the need for expression and the expression will be inherently aesthetic since meaning guides urgency, effort, and

aesthetic (London 1989, Burton 1988, Dissanayake 1988, and Smith 1983). The more meaningful, the more powerful the transformation, and as inner expression becomes more confident and sensitive and expressive, so, too, will the outer (London 1992). As Langer (1957) stated, the arts, and in this case the visual arts, provide us with a language or metaphorical bridge to self-knowledge, understanding, and meaning, which in turn form a bridge to reflection, perception, insight, imagination, and vision. We return to the questions of what is the ultimate aim of art, why am I making art, and why do we make art? Perhaps Langer would answer, to achieve insight and to understand the life of feeling, and London and Lowenfeld, to become whole.

Collaborative Art-Making

Art works can also be collectively and collaboratively created. Simply consider the great traditions of tapestry weaving, fresco painting, and monumental architecture...Mural-making is a common example to be found in schools and in our regional communities, which can be created within and beyond the school extending into the broader community. My concern is that the mural belong to the children and represent the children's ideas and art-making rather than being an adult-directed conception where children follow the univocal directions of an adult leader. The directed mural is not a dialogic collaboration and the true selves of the children will not become engaged.

Story: The Forest Mural

At Gilford, we decided, in late October, to create a large mural on the back wall of the classroom. Since the children had been studying the theme of cycles in nature involving weather and seasons, growth cycles of plants and trees, and the metamorphosis cycle of butterflies, Wendy and I decided upon the open theme of a Fall Forest. I began by sharing the idea with the children as a source idea—very willing to adapt flexibly to new suggestions that might emerge—and they took flight immediately with the forest. We brainstormed what they would like to show in our mural and made a word bank: trees, ground, leaves, butterflies, cocoons, roots, squirrels, flowers, bird's nests, weather...I then posed the problem of how we might arrange all these parts and put them together? We began a group plan with me drawing a scaled down rectangle representing the wall and sketching down their ideas. After two trees, I stopped sketching and the

children took over. I was amazed at how easily they were able to wait for one another and take turns and share ideas—this was going to be a very multivoiced and multiauthored mural! After conceptualizing the mural and developing their plan, our next step was to decide on media. Wendy suggested collage to the children since they all had prior experience and this would enable a great deal of small group and individual creating across the room. The children liked this idea, too, and added that they could mix media. I then asked how we might begin. What part of the mural should we start with and create first? Applying their previous experience they advised making the background first and then adding the big trees and then the smaller stuff. Sounded very workable. Now, the background was to be weather. Should we have one kind of weather or different kinds of weather? Different was decided. We divided the children into four groups based upon their weather interest. Each group would create a weather panel approximately 4'x5' and the panels would be stapled next to each other on the wall after they were made. We decided to use tempera paints in watercolor cake form with large brushes and sponges—again using prior knowledge of materials.

The groups of children worked together to reorganize the desks in the room in order to create large surfaces to paint upon and prepared all their supplies—many of which had to be shared since we did not have enough for every individual student but had enough for partner sharing. Smocks were at last put on and we began. Wendy put on some gentle new age music to help movements and associations flow. The children needed no help or prompting. Each group engaged in simultaneous monologue and dialogue across members. Plans were made, areas decided upon, and colors mixed and shared. Areas merged and overlapped. Weather patterns changed and transformed in response to the paints and the children's ongoing ideas. At the end of forty-five minutes we had four panels of highly sensorily expressive weather: sunny and warm; rainy, windy, and stormy; foggy and quiet; and rainy and wet! Lunch and recess. During recess Wendy and I stapled the panels to the walls so the children could see them altogether and be ready for the next phase.

Upon their return, the children were extremely proud of their weather panels and each pointed out the special areas he or she had painted and how they had helped one another with their ideas. Our next step was to create the giant trees. How could we do this, I asked? I prompted the children by reminding them of the time we had all used our bodies to become trees and they immediately connected. They suggested that

we could have tree volunteers lie down on the paper and partners could trace their body for the trunk and the big tree branches. They would then cut more branches and leaves and make the textures, etc. Volunteers. Tracing. Cutting. Elaborating. Michael wanted to make his own smaller tree—a birch tree. Fantastic. Synergistic creating ensued. Some groups used collage to create details and others unique combinations of mixed media. Volunteers emerged for various details: leaves, twigs, animals, birds, and more branches. Kyle created a 3-D bird's nest with little baby birds from yarns and colored papers. When we stapled the trees to the background, following our plan for location, the children helped to add the big branches. After this, Wendy and I stepped back and the children continued stapling and adding the smaller details. They brought chairs to sit on and to stand on. The wall became a giant fresco in progress. Kyle remembered the root systems of the trees and the underground. He was fascinated by underground creatures (he had a mole in his backyard) and he remembered that we had a book that showed diagram pictures of under-the-ground. He found the book and used it as a reference as he began to draw an underground area. The other children thought this was an awesome idea and extended the underground area across the entire mural. Wendy and I were onlookers—we provided support and encouragement and praise—but were not making any part of the mural. This was the children's mural and was their creation!

After another hour and a half of creating, the mural was pronounced finished. The mural was magnificent—a kaleidoscope of colors, textures, and images forming a magical children's forest. The room was a natural disaster. I reminded Wendy that creating was messy and not very neat! We laughed and gathered the children for cleanup—part of taking care of our materials, our tools and equipment, and our room. Within fifteen minutes we had tables and chairs back in place, supplies put away, the floor all cleaned up, tools cleaned and put away, and even the sink was clean! (the MOST favorite job of all—full of water and wetness). We had just sat down in our group circle to celebrate the children's accomplishment when in walked Principal Tocci. Just in time for viewing and sharing! He saw a very orderly classroom with an extraordinary mural and a circle of proudly beaming faces. He asked the children all kinds of questions and the children readily shared their knowledge of the forest and the nature cycles, applying concepts gleaned across math, science, visual art, and language art. They knew and understood a great deal concerning life cycles of trees, symmetry, texture, overlapping, metamorphosis, qualities of weather, etc....all manifested

and embodied in the mural. They had also shared their creativity, their problem-solving, their unique images, and their care for one another. At the very end of the day, we took a group photograph in front of the mural. Maggie was busy drawing a new mountain to add to the mural. She started to cry—upset because the mountain wasn't in the photograph. Julie and Katlyn went up to her and gave her a hug. Katlyn had brought a wet paper towel compress and pressed it against Maggie's forehead. They calmed her with their attention. Julie came to me and asked if I could take another picture with the three of them together and Maggie's mountain. This we did. Tears became smiles. And Mirrorland was becoming an ever increasingly enchanting place of possibility.

Closure

Art is more than a product, or a decoration, or a collection of superficial things and objects. Art is a process of enhancement, of making special, of elevating and connecting one's life: a process of meaning-making in which the art object is the attainment of a state of being and the expression of the state and a bridge towards that state. The art process is a living process and the art object is a living form of vital energy. I agree with London (NAEA conference 1992) when he described the function of art as the lifting out of the ordinary present of ordinary time and ordinary existence to a higher level of consciousness, awareness, reflectiveness, and towards vision and imagination. This is the state from which we develop our interconnectedness and find our interbeing. Art and visual art-making and engaged beholding can transport us to multidimensional living and experiencing. Connecting continues....intuition and reason, emotion and intelligence, fantasy and memory, passion and restraint, ineffable and effable, body and spirit, mystery and known, self and world, self and nature....as we become integrated and whole.

Lowenfeld (1968) emphatically articulates that the greatest mission of education is to be able to develop all of each individual's creative-artistic-perceptual-empathetic potential and enable these capabilities to flourish. He believes that the unfolding of these capabilities also promotes the development of human sensitivities and values while involving the individual in a search for self and human relationship. He presages Noddings and Martin in his call for the development of spiritual and relational values, for developing the whole individual, and for recognizing the void of scientific and technological advancement when not accompanied by spiritual drive, social community, freedom, creativity, and self-knowledge

(Lowenfeld 1968).

Traditional educational views in America identify children as students or pupils and give them passive cultural roles under varying degrees and conditions of supervision as they slowly gain the skills, dispositions, and knowledge deemed by adults as important for them to possess. The years of childhood have been considered as a bridge towards a future time rather than as a richly woven complex and poignant present (Vygotsky 1978, Werscht 1991). Within the traditional view, children and youth are removed from having cultural agency or from being able to construct cultural meaning. We have limited the kinds of forms considered legitimate for constructing, representing, and manipulating knowledge just as we have limited acceptable concepts of knowledge and reason. Such forms as “the political and poetic, the ideal and the intuitive, the canonic and the contemporary, the making and breaking, learning and burning...” (Paley 1995, p.5), which nurture the development of our capacities of imagining, feeling, valuing, meaning-making, and creating, have been placed on the periphery of mainstream educational priorities (Broudy 1987, Paley 1995, Friere and Macedo 1987, and Werscht 1991).

We still ask boys to think, as in the nineties, but we seldom tell them it is just putting this and that together, it is saying one thing in terms of another. To tell them this is to set their feet on a ladder the top of which sticks through the sky. (Robert Frost quoted by Kent 1992, p.91).

Is it possible for schools to move beyond the mass production of competitive, disconnected citizens, workers, and consumers and begin to engage in our artistry, love of beauty and expression, communication, relationship, and emotional wholeness? Can we nurture self-knowledge, ideation, agency, and meaning? Can we accept and nurture a holistic way of knowing that invites feeling, imagining, and reflective engagement with the world—a way of knowing that leads not only to the possession of facts but also to insight, vision, and creativity that is alive with meaning and moral significance? Can we invite participation in the world rather than passive observation? Can we inspire personal commitment and care?

I believe that we need every possible way to represent, understand, interpret, and connect with our world. A multiplicity of symbol systems and a holistic-comprehensive conceptualization of knowledge and reason can nurture multiple perspectives, values, and possibilities. The arts, and more specifically the visual arts, so long placed on the periphery of educational priorities, do provide such multiplicity and opportunity to develop the sensitivities and capacities of creative and holistic thinking, meaning-making, and agency in

all children (Broudy 1987, Fowler 1995, Lowenfeld 1968, and Paley 1995).

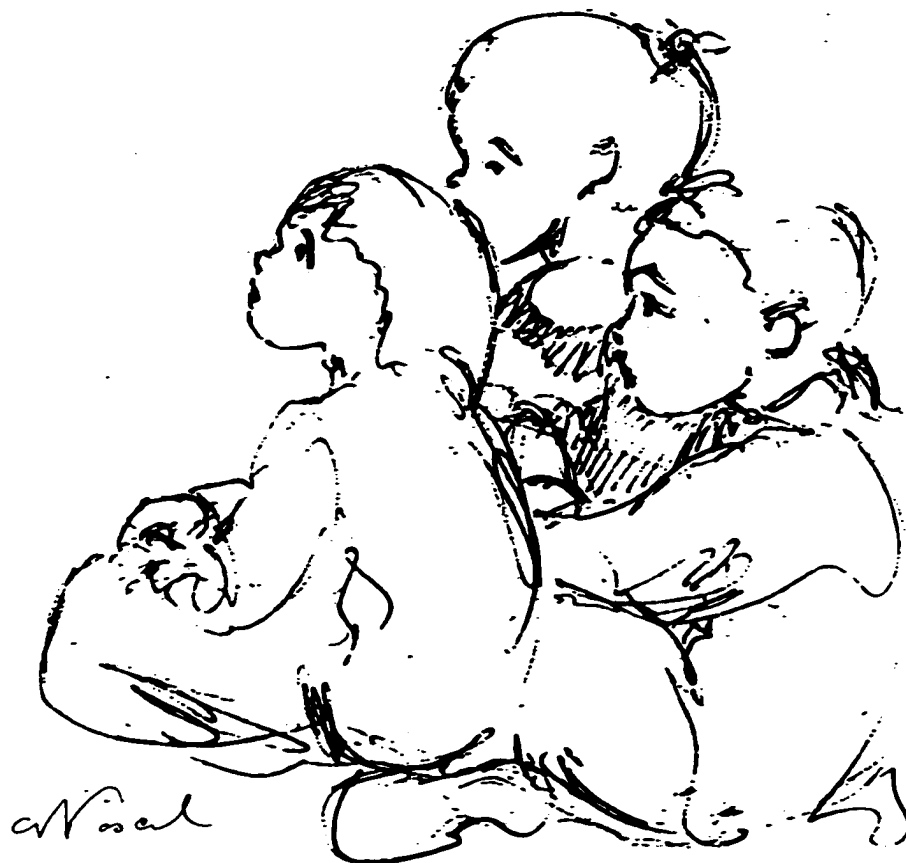
The Arts (and visual art)...supply insight and wisdom, in a word, meaning. Their power is that they move us. They serve as connectors that give understanding a human dimension...they help us define ourselves, and our times, as well as other people and other times...the Arts guide us to be aware of our own and other's feelings, as such they teach us one of the great civilizing capacities—to be empathetic. To the extent that the Arts teach empathy, they develop our capacity for compassion and humaneness. While intelligence can be used as a tool of greed and deception, empathy intercedes, reigning in such uses of intelligence...there is a near miracle here because as soon as we have a glimpse of other people's humanity we have crossed the cultural chasm that separates us...Science and technology do not lead to spirit. The Arts do. That is their role. Our spirits need as much nurturing as any other part of our mind...If we fail to touch the humanity of students we have not really touched them at all...students can be inspired by and through the Arts to reach deeper within themselves and stand in awe of the dimensions of life we cannot fully grasp—to contemplate our fragile and temporal being and the meaning of life in the vastness of the cosmos. (Fowler 1995, pp. 7-9).

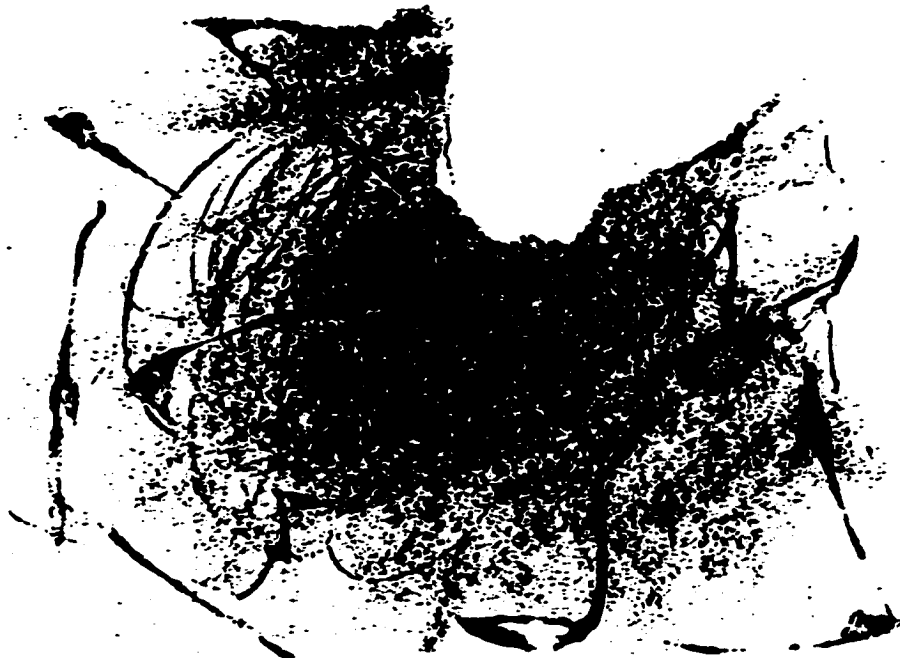
Art invites the exploration and discovery of the emotional, intuitive, irrational, and rational aspects of life as a whole. Knowing, thinking, feeling, and perceiving experience are unified into a breathing tapestry. Our understanding becomes liberated from straight line thinking and the possibilities of restructuring, reordering, disrupting, discovering, transforming, and inventing empower us to agency, meaning-making, and communication. Boundaries are called into question as multiple attitudes and voices are welcomed. Our knowledge of self through selves within and without is affirmed and expanded.

Painting, drawing, or constructing is a constant process of assimilation and projection: taking in through the senses a vast amount of information, mixing it up with the psychological self, and putting into a new form the elements what seem to suit the aesthetic needs of the artist at the time...I is the interaction between the symbols, the self, and the environment that provides the material for abstract intellectual processes. Therefore, mental growth depends upon a rich and varied relationship between a child and his environment; such a relationship is a basic ingredient of a creative art experience...No art expression is possible without self-identification with the experience expressed as well as with the art material by which it is expressed. This is one of the basic factors of any creative expression: it is the true expression of the self...Because these experiences change with growth, self-identification embraces the social, intellectual, emotional, and psychological changes within the child...there is also the need for the ability to identify with others. In a peaceful society that combines humans of different heritages, it is essential to be able to identify with those we fear, those we do not understand, or those who appear strange to us. Scientifically we have made great gains, but socially we no longer know our immediate neighbors, and we are unable to communicate with them peacefully. It is only through self-identification that we can begin to identify with others (Lowenfeld 1982, pp. 5, 6, 7, 19).

We must have multiple voices and multiple languages with which to affirm multiple realities. The construction of knowledge is a relational and relativistic activity in which no one voice or language can assume absolute authoritative status to the exclusion of others. We need to explore continually forms of thinking that are tentative, uncertain, illogical, unguaranteed...we need to take risks, challenge conventions,

and find joy and fulfillment in experimenting with the relativity of knowing in order to reach beyond the status quo and touch upon the possibilities of constructing our own meanings and be able to use what Paley (1995) terms the “Polyphonous Voice.” The polyphonous voice is a voice that integrates the personal, the poetic, discursive, critical, and symbolic. The polyphonous voice as described by Paley resonates within as the multiple facets of our inner self are made whole, and resonates without as our multiple voices engage in many forms of dialogue using many forms of representation. I perceive this polyphonous voice as our inner artist. This is the voice that discovers the safe dark cave in the lump of clay.



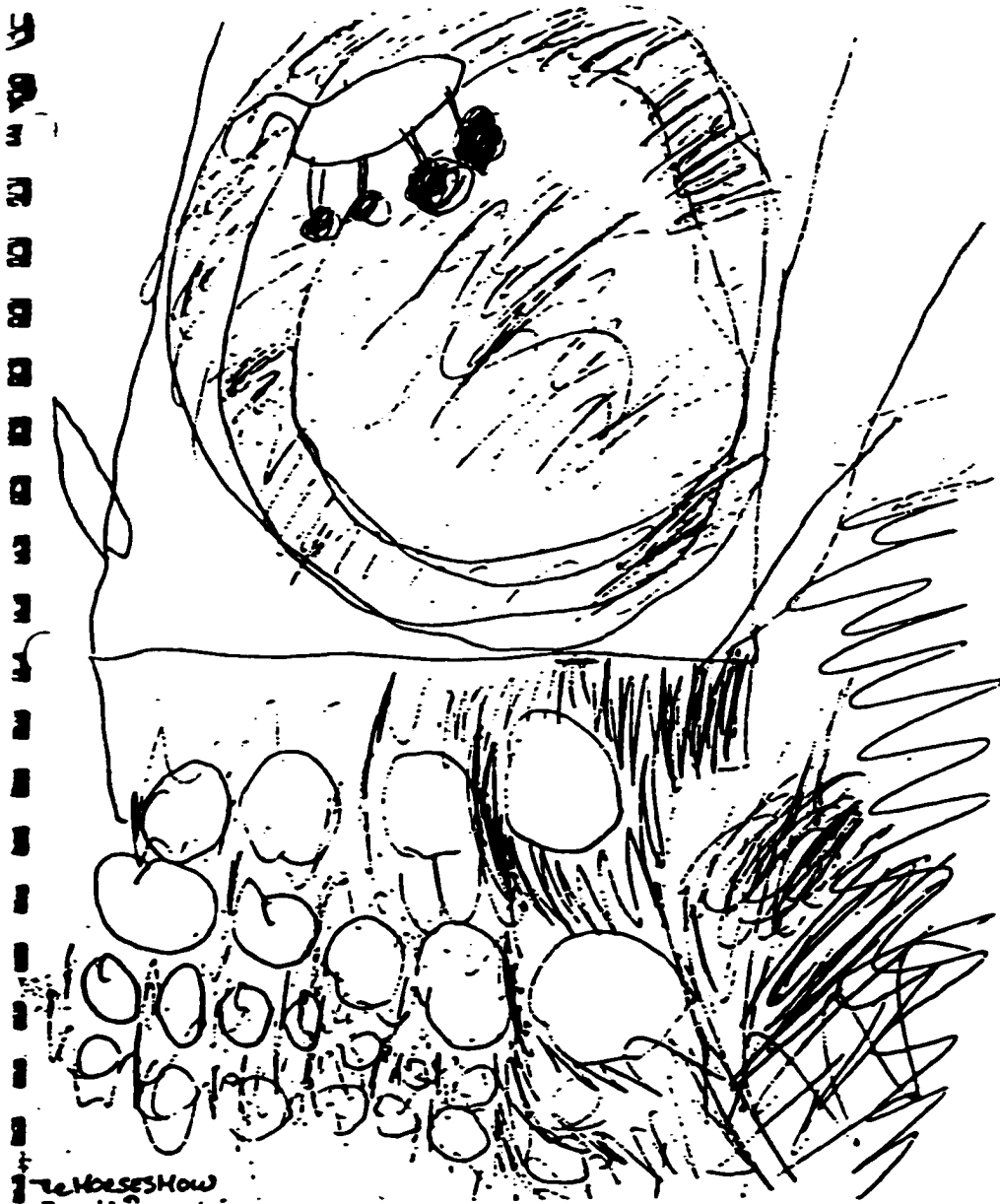


{ I would fly to a ^{picture} piccher And what
 would be in it? ^{Subjects} Swends of sky and
 glitter ~ I would be a ^{imaginary} amaginary
 so noone could ~~see~~ ^{picture} I glide across
 the ^{picture} piccher and gather some
 glitter, and take it home
 with me.

34. If I could fly by
 Mariah - April



42. Riding my Horse
by Mark - November



43. At the horse show
by Mark - November

CHAPTER VI

ENGAGEMENT AND EMPATHY

When a man goes walking on a quiet summer night
and the flickering light of the stars twinkles in the sky,
he gradually becomes envisioned in a feeling of friendship
and scorn for the world,
and eternity descends on you with this universal silence of Nature
and calm of mind, the covert might of the Immortal Spirit,
speaks out in elusive languages
and indescribable notions...
(Dialogue from Larks on a String)

Story: My Horse

Little Mark from our first-grade class in Gilford asks me if he can draw in my sketchbook during circle time. I have noticed that my sketchbook has become a special place for the children to draw and design special personal pictures and collaborative pictures. During the entire circle time, Mark has been absorbed in his drawing [see sample]. When I ask him to tell me about his drawing, he tells me a personal story. He and his family went to a horse show. His horse, Tony, is in the corral running in a circle and there is a crowd of people outside watching and sitting on the grass. He loves his horse Tony very much and knows how to feed him and can ride him all by himself! Later in the week, we are painting and writing about quiet. Mark paints a picture of Tony surrounded by grass and sky. He writes, "Quiet is brushing my horse." Wendy and I come to know that Mark does not really have a horse named Tony but wishes so much for a horse that he has created his own imaginary story, developed in very detailed pictures. Through his pictures, he shares his inner longing and makes it public, trying also to make it real.

Introduction

Engagement and empathy are two of the most significant concepts woven throughout the spiral constellation of the compassionate community. Within this chapter, I present a discussion of engagement and empathy in relation to aesthetic experiencing and art-making. I begin with an analysis of aesthetic experience, seeking to clarify the concept of aesthetic as being descriptive of experience rather than being a formal discipline of study. I then elaborate upon the concepts of heightened awareness and engagement that

apply to the beholding of life and works of art and to the making and creating of art. Following this discussion, I introduce my theory of the aesthetic cycle of making and creating, developed from the transformative nature of the aesthetic experience and the sensory perceptual experiencing of a state of heightened awareness. This state of heightened awareness catalyses the imagination. Through the choice of form of representation and interaction with media, the individual creates a highly personal and metaphorical artistic expression through which one's inner voice speaks. I return to empathy in relation to the making and beholding of art forms and the entering into multivoiced and polyphonous dialogue embedded with care and relationship. This brings us to the reconsideration of the self as artist: the self as being capable of aesthetic experiencing, engagement, envisionment, creating, and reconnecting to our inner spirit. As artists we use languages that penetrate our whole beingness and bring our I and Thou together to meet with one another.

Aesthetic Experience

Being in the World

Aesthetics is most often understood as a formal domain of philosophical inquiry that has been studied through many epistemological lenses and that will continue to be a dynamic arena of ongoing discourse extending far beyond the parameters of this study. I would like to narrow my discussion to a consideration of the term "aesthetic" applied as an adjective or adverb that is descriptive of experience. "Aesthetics" as a word symbol derives from the Greek "aisthetikos" meaning "perception" or "to perceive, especially by feeling" (Schirmacher 1998 and Webster 1947). I will focus on this concept of aesthetic experience as a particular way of perceiving and of being in the world that begins with an enhanced state of sensory perceptual awareness; connects to our emotional-affective responses; joins our cognitive conceptual framework of knowledge; and catalyses new thought, new understandings, imagination, and insight (Blumenfeld-Jones 1997, Greene 1998, Burton 1988, and Eisner 1994, 1998).

Aesthetic experience is a particular way of *being in the world* which brings enhancement to all we do. If we take 'enhancement of all we do' as an educative good and can particularize it within aesthetics, then we are justified in seeking ways of bringing about aesthetic experience through our educative endeavors ...Let us begin by noting that in educational experience we address more than cognition and mental feelings and, thus, are not restricted to questions of epistemology. Through educational experience we learn ways to be and these ways, perhaps, more than cognitive learning, stay with us throughout our lives (Blumenfel-Jones 1997, p.2).

Such experiencing includes our responding to, participating with, and building relationships with our selves, others, our natural world, and the ideas and symbolic communications of humankind as we engage in acts of beholding, cooperative participation, and creating. I am interpreting “Aesthetic” as being descriptive of this heightened state of awareness and insight as we respond to significant aspects of our environment and significant art forms as discerned by both maker and beholder. Significant aspects of our environment include, as London suggests, deep inter and intra personal relationships in addition to our responses to the beauty, harmony, and suffering in the world—within our selves and the selves of others, without our selves, and in-between—as we find our meeting grounds and medicine circles. Dewey (1938) also maintains that the sources of aesthetic experiencing lie within our human experiences, which draw our attention, spark our inspiration, catalyze our imaginations, and arouse our emotions. He describes experience as an interpenetration of self-world-event, the heightened perception of which leads to aesthetic experience. Within each of us lie the seeds of our aesthetic sensitivities. When cultivated and nurtured, these sensitivities can expand our perceptual awareness, our capabilities of engagement, and lay the foundations for the development of multiple literacies across the arts.

This cultivation offers a path of learning for wholeness, harmony, compassion, and envisionment (Dissanayake 1988, London 1994, Greene 1995, Lowenfeld 1958, and Read 1967). The Zen Buddhist garden exemplifies a meeting ground where our aesthetic sensitivities can be cultivated. This garden represents a place of aesthetic, spiritual, and natural harmony. This garden is also a place for contemplation, meditation, reflection, and the heightening of one’s awareness on all planes of consciousness. Traditionally representing the pursuit of beauty and spirituality, it can be considered a model microcosm of the universe. This microcosm includes the dualities of paradise and the mundane, male and female, nature and humanity—all existing in harmony and perfection of balance. Each element of the garden is beautiful, unique, and essential. The garden is the physical manifestation of the Zen Koan, the spiritual riddle: a poetic paradox leading one to achieve the ability to hear water in a dry garden; to move without movement; and to listen to stones speaking...The garden presents many paths to knowledge, understanding, compassion, and enlightenment. Every object in the garden holds a spiritual message—holds knowledge. It is in constant change yet is constant. Each time entered, a new journey begins (Yoshikawa 1991). Could our schools become such a garden?

The word, with its void and crevices,
Has no real being.
What is grasped by words is vulnerable;

Richer, more poetic, the flux of realities.
(Takahashi 1972, p. 8).

This garden surrounds us every day of our lives if we take the time to stop and look and deeply “see.” I may stop and take the time to gaze deeply upon the willow leaves dancing in the wind; stop to listen and hear the crackling of the snow falling in the deep silent woods; become mesmerized by a translucent spider’s web; savor the rich aroma of freshly baked bread and remember the joys of past family celebrations; listen to and hear the mournful stories in the song of a violin; build a sand castle at the beach; dream upon the calligraphic frost designs upon my windowpanes... These are the kinds of daily experiences that describe a kind of being-in-the-worldness involving an open-minded spontaneity, a sense of wonder and discovery, and a willingness to suspend habituated consciousness and experience for the very first time once again. This also requires a willingness to give deeply of one’s attention rather than mere superficial glancing. Embodied in this kind of attention is depth of care. Care-filled attending leads to the discovery of meaning and connection (Dewey 1938).

There are mornings when the sun pours in and the sky is that kind of blue you know you’ve never seen before. And the quality of the white clouds floating and the geraniums blooming indoors and the floor and the carpets and all the colors and shapes are new too. These moments are very intense because you can hardly believe that this beauty exists every day when you are going faster or you have your back turned to it...and it is these moments that one feels yes, the same blood runs in us all and these things are really me too. All these things are, as Alan Watts said, extensions of myself. And I think how beautiful, how really great I am. I am this tree and I am that flower and I am not separate from them (Corita 1992, p.28).

Being in Empathy

Aesthetic experiencing is also, as Bakhtin (1993) suggested, a state of being-in-empathy when one’s sense of self is enhanced and expanded temporality to include the consciousness or awareness of something or someone previously other; perhaps even a temporary state of co-beingness (Thich Nhat Hahn 1987) involving both projection and reception of awareness and consciousness. Lowenfeld (1982) identifies empathetic projection as being able to put oneself inside the place of another, to perceive sensitively the other, and asserts that this ability is a core component of aesthetic experiencing. Noddings (1984)

emphasizes the component of receiving the other and Dewey (1934) emphasizes interpenetration of consciousness.

Living aesthetically is an active participation in the world through one's senses, the outcome of such engagement being unknowable beforehand, but having a profound effect on one's sense of place and value in the world. ...a search for meaning is not a slopistic act. It is a search for experiencing connection with others in our world as well as in our physical and social environment. This connectedness carries with it an experience of wholeness (however temporary this may be) and is my primary meaning of educational enhancement! (Blumenfeld-Jones 1997, p.3).

Aesthetic experiencing is also a searching for and a gathering of meaning. Blumenfeld-Jones (1997) emphasizes that aesthetic experiencing is an unfolding of meaning within the interpretive tradition and through the use of dialectical process. Self-understanding and world understanding require our ability to examine closely our presuppositions and habituated consciousness and to transcend and even contradict these presuppositions. Such transcendence is accomplished by opening ourselves to the possibility of dialectical inquiry between our selves, our world, and others as we seek to experience multiple horizons of viewpoint and assumptions of meaning (Kaspirin 1997). As Bakhtin consistently reminds us, meaning is relative and dialogic—insight and understanding are gathered from the weaving together of richly multidimensional (time and space), multifaceted, and multilingual perspectives into a tapestry of consciousness and interrelationship.

Bakhtin (1993) in his essay *Art and Answerability* describes aesthetic experience as an embodied ontological experience that generates a sense of wholeness, fullness, and connectedness. This state of experiencing is a conscious embodiment of meaning through which understandings become available.

Aesthetics is far more capacious than is usually thought, including fundamental questions of epistemology, ethics, and indeed, ontology (Ed. Holquist 1991, Bakhtin, p. xix).

Bakhtin clearly differentiates aesthetic experiencing from the aesthetic object or object/subject of aesthetic contemplation. Aesthetic experiencing is an act-deed, an embodied experiencing that catalyses, to paraphrase Eisner's words (1998), a dialogue between the mind and the world as sensibility, understanding, and affect become whole. Our reflective responding to the aesthetic experience, our reactions and interpretations within the lens of our individuality and uniqueness, transforms the experience by giving it meaning (Bakhtin 1993, Eisner 1994, and Langer 1957).

Sensitized Perception

This act-deed begins with our direct sensory perceptions. As Dewey emphasizes, our participation with our world is made possible through our senses.

Experience is the result, the sign, and the reward of that interaction of organism and environment which when it is carried to the full, is a transformation of interaction into participation and communication. Since sense organs with their connected more apparatus are the means of this participation, any and every derogation of them, whether practical or theoretical, is at once effect and cause of a narrowed and dulled life-experience (Dewey 1938, p. 22).

Eisner (1994) emphasizes that our sensory perceptions are our primary means of getting in touch with and being able to connect with our world through our increasingly “refined” abilities to experience the qualities of this world. I place quotation marks around the adjective *refined* because I have continually observed that young children have highly sensitive capacities for aesthetic experiencing and that, ironically, most of our teaching moves the child in a direction away from such responsiveness.

I recall sharing my observations with my students and asking them to try following, as Corita (1992) suggests, a young child on a small journey out of doors—to take a short walk together but to be guided by the child rather than their adult going-somewhere-specific-in-a-hurry. When we shared our experiences, one of my students who then had a three-year-old son described her journey. She began by saying that every morning she took a walk down the street to meet her neighbor for a cup of coffee. The walk was always frustrating because of the need constantly to focus her child and keep moving forward. On this day, she decided to try the journey and leave her intended goal of getting to the neighbor’s house suspended. She then described a very slow moving yet magical journey of mutual discovery. Every few steps down the driveway, her child would stop. Instead of prodding him forward, she stopped, too, and asked, what is it? Her son delighted in small noises, sparkles of light, scraps of leaves, moving shadows, the beauty of tiny stones, the spider web cracks in the asphalt, the wondrous voyage of an ant... The culmination of their journey came at the end of the driveway by the water drain, all clogged up with leaves and twigs, creating a fascinating waterfall and ecosystem—hitherto unnoticed—when one took the time to look with engagement, wonder, and imagination... They never did arrive at the neighbor’s home, but they

spent their time traveling down the driveway together sharing their discoveries and imaginings. Her final remark to us was to share how beautiful that journey had been and that the possibility for such a journey had been in front of her all this time. How much we can learn from children about aesthetic awareness and experience! Here we have Dewey's artist as adventurer, explorer, and wonderer (Dewey 1938)! Sometimes we need to stop and try to view the world afresh.

My most significant aesthetic experience took place many years ago in a city not too far from here, in Boston, Massachusetts. I was young and don't recall the specifics, but every time I go there the same shivers are sent down my spine, the same perspirations flow through my fingers, and the same utter joy wafts through my body...

Fenway Park, one of the oldest ballparks in the country, full of the greenest grass I have ever set eyes on, and also full of the richest history ever known to any baseball fan. My heart begins racing as the car pulls off the highway and intensifies the closer to the gate I get. The wafting scent of Fenway franks, nachos, and stale beer fill my nostrils with a smell that can only be sniffed if you are there. Once I proceed through the gate and see the majestic, perfectly groomed infield, the shivers race through my body. An odd feeling to all, considering baseball is played in the dog days of August.
(Personal collection of PSC student writing)

Story: Trees

It is mid-September in Gilford, New Hampshire. Wendy has introduced the theme of "trees" to the children as part of a larger unit of study revolving around life cycles. We will be going outside for a tree walk. Wendy discusses observing and using all of our five senses to observe as closely as possible. She asks the children to imagine how we would be able to identify food and then a friend if each of our senses were gradually turned off? The children decide that our senses are really important for giving us information. Wendy challenges them to use their senses as fully as possible to observe the trees during our tree walk. We first encounter a birch tree. The children first notice that the color is white and that the tree is slender. They then identify the different parts of the tree and rush in a group to touch the tree. They describe the bark as smooth. Julie later tells me that this is so you can make napkins with the bark. We ask the children to close their eyes and listen for the leaves singing in the wind. The weather is quite windy and the leaves "rustle and swish" according to the children. Now the children notice that the tree does not stand straight up but bends to one side in the same direction as the wind is blowing. During our later in the day drawing time, Maggie and Jeff will incorporate this movement into their drawings. We then travel to a giant maple tree at the edge of the playground. This tree, the children unanimously decide, will be their very special first grade class tree—the tree they will very carefully and continually

observe and pay attention to all year long. Wendy asks a series of sensory observation questions. The children observe that the tree bark is gray, pink, green, brown, orange, gold, yellow, and black—full of colors when they look closely. The texture of the bark is “itchy, scratchy, bumpy...it feels like an old lady...” We engage in hugging the tree and looking up to the top from a circle we have made with our bodies around the tree. The children ooh and aah at how very high the tree is and how far up it grows and grows into the sky. They notice the blue of the sky against the branches and how the branches change size. They imagine a squirrel climbing a path to the top. We again listen to the wind. We continue our journey and travel to an evergreen tree and to a laurel tree with orange berries. Julie and Terry have collected some leaves and compare leaf sizes, shapes, colors, and edges. Julie describes one of the leaves as being smooth on top but “like a toothbrush on the edges.” I ask which leaf is more pointy, the maple or the laurel? They choose the laurel because it is like an oval with one big point at the end.

We return indoors and sit in our discussion circle preparing for our drawing time—our art-making time. The children have just come from a rich multisensory experiencing of trees in the fullest sense of aesthetic experiencing. We discuss their observations, adding only the consideration of the animals living in the trees. We also discuss our knowledge of line movement and line quality, color mixing with craypas, using the different parts of the craypas for different effects, and how we might show the different qualities of the trees and weather in our drawings. I invite the children to brainstorm their ideas and we mutually demonstrate these ideas to one another. They decide that if we each make at least one tree drawing, and if we put the drawings together, we will have a forest!! The children choose the size of paper they wish to use and carefully consider how they will hold their papers—the long way sideways or the tall way up and down...The children need no help initiating their ideas. I emphasize that they are each artists and that these are their drawings and can be just the way they want them to be. The room becomes almost completely silent—filled with concentration, purpose, and excitement. Each image is entirely unique and incorporates individual sensory responsiveness to the trees, the manipulation of the craypas, and color. Terry discovers and shares that you can press down very hard and achieve very bright and dense colors! He colors his tree pink, blue, purple, and silver. He tells me that he has made his tree “colorful!” We have created a forest for our classroom, the seeds of which began growing during the direct sensory perceptual experience of our tree walk and our depth of observation.

Heightened Awareness and Beholding

Seizing Meanings

Greene's seminal work, Landscapes of Learning, includes her essay "Imagination and Aesthetic Literacy" (1978). Within this essay, Greene presents the concepts of aesthetic experience, aesthetic perception, creative encounter, conceptual awareness, and the imaginative mode of awareness as she seeks, in her words, to nurture a mode of thinking, a mode of sense-making that will incorporate deep attentiveness, wonder, and awareness. This mode of awareness will enable us to "seize the meaning of the world or of history as that meaning comes into being. Curriculum, it seems to me, ought to be a means of providing opportunities for seizing a range of meanings by persons open to the world" (Greene 1978, p. 169). She describes aesthetic experience as "a different kind of breathing" (Greene 1978, p. 171), inspired by direct experiences with art forms. She emphasizes that such experiences free us from linear positivistic thinking and taking-for-grantedness. We become freed from the mundane and propelled to a world of imagination and the reading of meaning, where we can effect connections and achieve continuities between meanings and acknowledge the emotion inherent in relevancy. The aesthetic experience changes the nature of reality for the maker and for the beholder of the art form, opening new critical perspectives, shifting our consciousness, and shocking or transporting us into a state of wide-awakeness. Greene emphasizes that the world of art is a world of meaning and a fundamental source or wellspring for aesthetic engagement. Engagement refers to a state of being fully and deeply attentive, a state of complete engrossment and interconnection. As such, engagement also shares many characteristics of empathy and compassion.

Beholding and Responding

Aesthetic experiencing for Greene is a process of attending, of engagement, and of meaning-making (paralleling the development of a caring relationship) by the *beholder*, for her work focuses on the individual's *beholding and responding* to works of art. Such an encounter must be dynamic, subjective, interactive; it cannot be passive, superficial glimpsing nor detached intellectual analysis. This engagement



35. The colorful tree
by Terry -
October/November

is an exchange of meaning—from the artist to the artwork to the artist to the artwork to the beholder to the artwork—an ongoing dialogue of shared meanings: the artist releases her perceptions of meaning into the work of art, so, too, the work of art has meanings that are released to the attending beholder and that grow within the beholder in relation to the beholder's experience. Thus the encounter with meaning is also and encounter of imagination and transformation (Greene 1978 and Dewey 1938).

We then have the ability to uncouple the work of art from the everyday world and relocate it within our imagination, or in Green's words, in aesthetic space. This is our capability of aesthetic perception and conceptual awareness. What does this mean? Conceptual awareness, according to Greene, within the context of aesthetic experiencing, is the awareness of the art object as an aesthetic object. The aesthetic object

...is something that has to be achieved, brought into being by one who perceives, who reads, who attends. Many people do not understand that mere printed words, musical notes, brushstrokes, or canvas can not be regarded as works of art. They do not realize that works of art come into existence when a certain kind of heeding, noticing, or attending takes place; they do not realize that living persons through and by means of encounter with a work, constitutes it (if they are wide awake and attentive enough) as a work of art (Greene 1978, p. 191).

As an aesthetic object, the work of art embodies and evokes meanings. It is saturated with story and with meaning if we can, as beholders, enter into the work of art and begin this exchange (Dewey 1938).

Edmund Burke Feldman has developed a process of "aesthetic scanning" that has been utilized by art educators for many years as a path towards engagement, heightened perception, interpretation, and the discovery of meanings when beholding works of art. The process has four steps: intensive observation and sensory description of the art work; detailed observation and analysis of organization and arrangement; interpretation of meanings both personal and those intended by the artist; and the development of value judgements based upon a variety of criteria including personal tastes and preferences and socio-cultural-historical values. Dewey also proposes a process of deep looking, analysis, and interpretation as a means of entering into the work of art with full attention and engagement.

Our goal is the development of insight, understanding, emotional responding, and appreciation. "Perception is an act of the going-out of energy in order to receive, not a withholding of energy...To perceive, a beholder must create his own experience. And his creation must include relations comparable to

those the original producer underwent. They are not the same in any literal sense” (Dewey 1938, pp. 52 and 54). Engagement, for Dewey, is an act of “interpenetration”: an integrative act of reciprocal giving and receiving of shared meanings and insight. Is this possible in the classroom? Can we so engage with works of art rather than the surface recognition and identification of works of art? The key, I believe, is using a process guided by Feldman’s model, with the goal of meaning-making and inner connection—not as a means of finding right answers.

Story: Beholding Chagall and Van Gogh as Catalysts for Imagination

Our first graders have been writing stories for quite a while now. But not everyone. Wendy and I know these variations in writing proficiency represent a combination of individual developmental and emotional contexts, and we trust that each child will develop at his or her own pace as we strive to maintain an optimal zone of proximal development appropriate to each student. However, school systems tend to strive for uniformity of growth and development and the children who are not writing as proficiently are beginning to feel the seeds of self-doubt. Wendy and I want to keep their confidence high. We decide to focus on the many ways we can tell stories: oral, written, dramatic, and with pictures. We bring storybooks to share with the children that have no words but are full of pictures. The children create their own stories inspired from the pictures. I then bring a large (36” x 48”) reproduction of Chagall’s painting, *The Wedding*. I introduce the painting to the children by telling them that some artists tell stories in their paintings and some of these stories are from their own lives—just as we tell some of our personal stories in our pictures.

I provide the children with a brief contextual introduction to the artist, trying to make him alive as an individual with whom the children can connect rather than overwhelming them with biographical facts. I then invite them into the story following Feldman’s guide. We become story detectives looking for clues. What do we see? What smaller pictures and details are within the larger picture? A bride. How do we know? She has a wedding dress and a veil, but she’s holding a fan instead of flowers. He has a purple suit. There are angels. How many? Where are they? What are they doing? What else do we see? A giant chicken! That’s really weird. A blue tower behind the people. A giant sun—yellow and red-orange. Lots of little houses. A big tall tree full of greeny blue leaves... We discover all kinds of things in this picture. I lead the

children towards arrangement and analysis. What do you think Chagall used to make this painting? Why? Paint. Lots of texture and brushstrokes. Is anything repeated again and again like a pattern? The wings, the shapes of the leaves, the eye of the chicken, the colors of red and gold. We are deeply observing and paying attention to the painting. As we do so, we enter into the painting. We begin to seek for meaning and interpretation. The children ask me, Why are the people floating? Why are the angels upside down? Why does she look unhappy? I turn the questions back to the children and ask them to imagine themselves in this picture, imagine themselves as the bride, the groom, the angels... What could the story be? They invent their own collaborative story drawn from their sensory emotional responses to the painting and their own personal memories and associations and imaginings that have been catalyzed by the painting. Finally, they wish to know Chagall's story, too. Interestingly for me, they do not ask for *the right story* or *the real story*, they ask for Chagall's story—considering his story as one of many possibilities that we have shared. Thus we discover individual and mutual meanings as we enter into our emerging stories and possibilities.

Earlier in the fall at Gilford, we have been exploring the sensory qualities of brushstrokes, movement, texture, fall weather, and cycles of seasons and time. We have been collaging, drawing, and painting. I bring in a large reproduction of Van Gogh's painting, *Starry Night*. The children are entranced by the size of this reproduction and ask if I have painted this picture. So I introduce Van Gogh as a fellow artist who was fascinated by the world of nature and was full of strong emotions that he expressed in his paintings (we have already been expressing our emotions in our painting through the use of expressive lines and marks and colors). I invite the children to discover closely what is in the picture. They discover mountains, trees, bushes, little houses, a tall church tower, swirling clouds, stars, a moon-sun, wind, and many, many different colors and brushstrokes. They further discover a feeling of space—you could walk far into the painting—and a feeling of excitement because everything is moving from the brushstrokes. We decide to enter further into the painting by becoming the different parts of the painting—by dramatizing the painting and making it come alive through our bodies. They volunteer for different parts and invent sound effects and movements to accompany their dramatic interpretation. Brian is the ding-dong clock tower standing straight and tall with his arms creating a steeple. Katlyn is the moon-sun smiling and holding her arms in a circle. Maggie will be the twinkling, singing stars. Julie will dance like the wind whooshing and

swirling. David, Mark, Jeff, and Michael want to be the little houses rocking in the wind. They curl up into small rolling balls. Terry and Stefan offer to be the trees swaying and rustling in the wind—they have been trees many times before. Kyle decides to be a tiny mole living under the bushes. We decide upon a stage and consider spatial arrangements in order to give a sense of depth. The children problem solve how to show that the different parts of the picture also have different high and low locations and they chairs and boxes to stand on in order to portray these locations. They also consider size and scale relationships, stretching and compressing their bodies into various configurations. When we are ready, Maggie announces our play, *THE STARRY NIGHT*, and runs back to place. Wendy signals the beginning and the children begin simultaneously to move and create sound effects. They collaboratively recreate the painting in their bodies. The idea sprouts from the children to produce the painting as a play for the whole school—complete with costumes and words. And they want to see more paintings and know more about this artist Van Gogh! Instead of learning about Van Gogh and the painting *Starry Night*, they engaged with, discovered, encountered, and imaginatively entered into the world of the painting. They also collaboratively created their own imaginative world inspired by the painting.

Imaginative mode of awareness

When we are so engaged, the “cotton wool” (Greene 1978, p. 186) is removed from our eyes and our perception enhanced. Engagement with the arts makes this possible and opens us to rediscover our imaginative mode of awareness. This imaginative mode of awareness then makes possible creative encounters with our world and the actual creating-making of art forms. Thus we can reunify the “severed parts of reality” (Greene 1978, p. 187) and the severed parts of self (Lowenfeld 1958). What begins as the perceptual objective reality of the senses becomes engagement and the transformation into envisionment and an awareness of possibilities and alternative realities.

When one encounters a great work of art, he finds the horizons of his world, his way of seeing the world, his self-understanding broadened; he sees in a different way sometimes for the first time, but always in a more experienced way (Richard Palmer 1969, p.223, quoted by Greene 1978, p.180).

Whenever we encounter works of art, we first respond with our senses, then begin the journey of engagement as we move from initial responding, to observing attentively, to full engagement, and to

transforming into meaning with aesthetic import via our imagination (Greene 1978). This level of awareness is further accompanied by an internal wholeness: a unification of body-mind- emotion-and spirit, thus generating a multidimensional and harmonious knowing and experiencing (Eisner 1994, Bakhtin 1993, Dewey 1938, and Greene 1978). Our understandings are enhanced, and we can see the world in new ways and from hitherto unexplored perspectives.

Engaged Creating

The Creating of Art Forms: the Practice of Art

Encounter includes creating. Aesthetic engagement is as integral to the act of engaged creation as to engaged beholding. Judith Burton discusses this very relationship of aesthetic and creative engagement as she examines the interplay of aesthetic responses during the act of creating. For Burton (1988), this aesthetic responding or the making of aesthetic judgments is deeply rooted within the process of creating and cannot be taught separately to children. We “do” aesthetics in the process of creating. This is radically different from being taught about aesthetics, which not only is passive learning but also is learning devoid of personal meaning and is secondhand knowledge filtered through someone else’s aesthetic and experiential lens. She describes a dynamic interdependent model of the cultivation of aesthetic judgement/awareness as part of the creative act and asserts that the creative act is aesthetic awareness. She presents an integrated view of artistic knowing consistent with the “consideration of how the human mind sorts and synthesizes in the process of acquiring knowledge” (Burton 1988, p. 43). She advocates the simultaneous nurturance of creativity-imagination and aesthetic understanding where aesthetic is less a body of knowledge and is instead a domain of experience.

I would like to suggest that what I am calling the aesthetic dimension of experience lies at the interface of the active work of the imagination and the active work of shaping concrete materials into visual images. Furthermore, I would suggest that aesthetic judgment is the activity of the imagination, regulates the relationship between the products of the imagination, or inner ideas, on the one hand, and the shaping of the symbolic medium (concrete materials) on the other. For judgments are made as attention swings back and forth from the requirements of inner ideas, requirements of materials. As thoughts are extended out there in visual form, and requirements made by the work itself as it becomes its own thing with its own formal demands (Burton 1988, p. 44).

According to Burton, aesthetic refers to what she refers to as the “fit” in the work when the artist’s ideas and

medium fit together and compellingly invite a beholder to entertain new meanings, new forms of life and feeling, stretching beyond the world of concrete experience to that wide-awake awareness that provokes a whole range of responses, interpretations, and meanings.

The invitation to meaning, explains Burton who is echoing Greene and Dewey, is made possible because our initial responses are rooted to our sensory-affective-dynamic mechanism of thought for both the maker and the beholder. It is via the senses playing with imagination and memory that more complex meanings and metaphorical connections develop. Via the senses our emotional-intellectual integrations are made.

...Moreover, it is at this level of our shared sensory memory, or biological histories, that individual and cultural aesthetic judgments of value can seem to be continuous. I am assuming that an aesthetic response is unitary and cognitive in the widest sense. However, this unitary response is but the outcome of a series of differentiations and integrations that take place at the many different levels of organization in the human intellect. Of these levels, psychologically speaking, the sensory-affective dynamic is the most powerful because it is an “in the body” experience (Burton 1988, p. 46).

Another critical component of the aesthetic domain of experience as described by Burton is the activity of the imagination! She reminds us that even our everyday perception of the world involves acts of imagination, but what takes imagination into the realm of artistry and aesthetics is its meeting with media and materials such as paint, clay, sounds, motions, and alliterative words. This meeting of media and imagination represents the meeting of two distinct yet connected phenomenon: 1) thoughts in the head and concrete materials attentively and sensorily perceived that invite the imagination to make metaphorical connections between thoughts, ideas, feelings, sensations, memories of experience, and 2) the formation of something that previously was not. During this process, during this interplay of inner and outer responses, decisions concerning meaning and value occur.

...[imagination] is a way of seeing and feeling things as they compose an integral whole. It is the large and generous blending of interests at the point where the mind comes in contact with the world. When old and familiar things are made new in experience, there is imagination...There is always some measure of adventure in the meeting of mind and universe, and this adventure, is, in its measure, imagination...imaginative experience what happens when varied materials of sense quality, emotion, and meaning come together in a union which marks a new birth in the world (Dewey 1938, p 267).

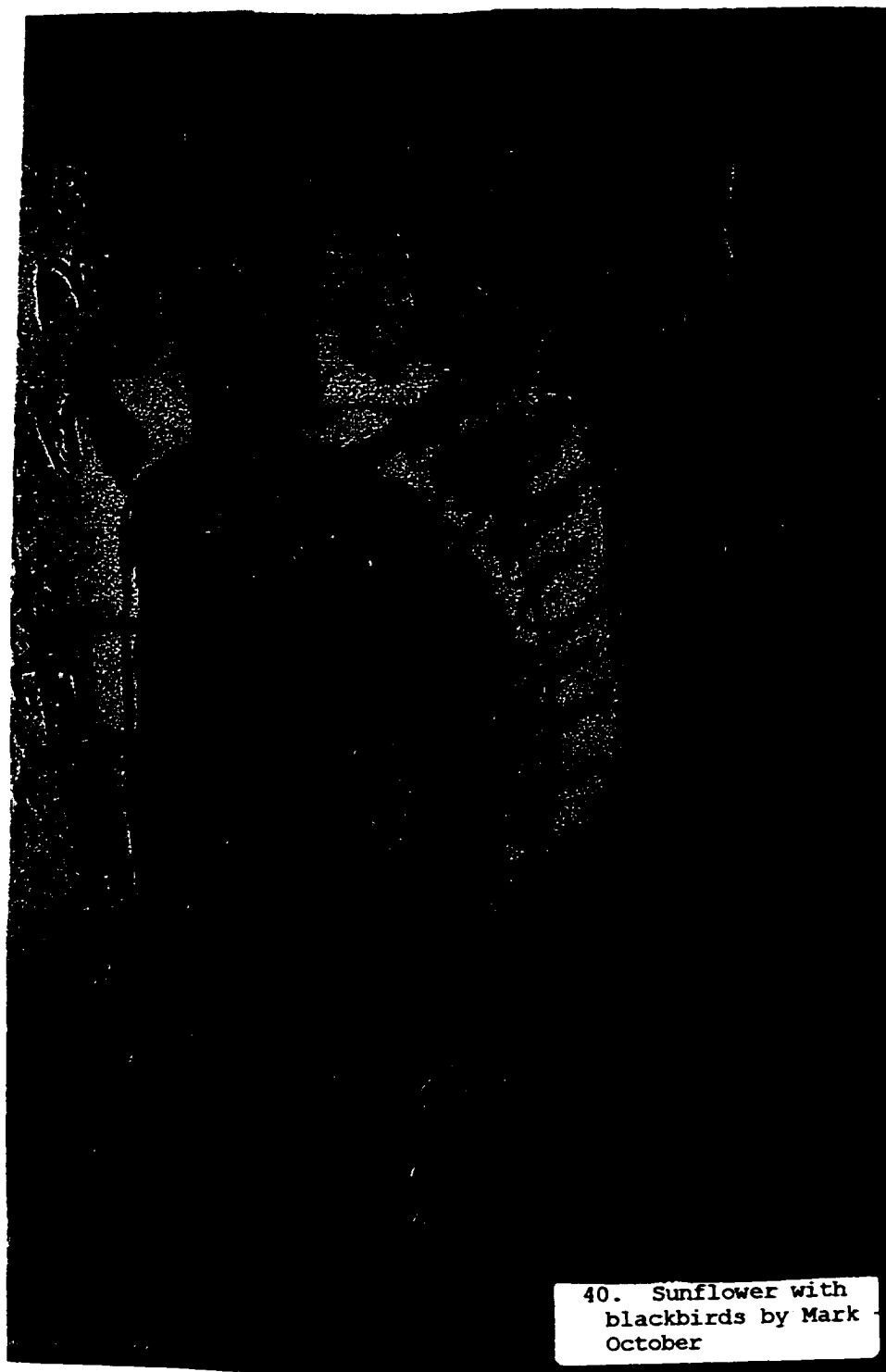
Encounter must include making. Translating to educational practice, Burton asserts that it is the

practice of, the making of, the creating of art forms that develops and cultivates our aesthetic sensibilities and awareness.

...it is through the practice of art that I believe we learn best about the aesthetic domain of experience and how to make nuanced aesthetic judgments. It is through the practice of art that the senses and the imagination interplay, setting the scene for complex reflective judgments. Furthermore, what we learn through practice, I would argue, can be generalized to an understanding and appreciation of the works of others. Such generalizations are not so easily learned to other way round...(Burton 1988, p. 61).

Story: Sunflowers

Our first graders went on a field trip to a local farm. During our subsequent discussions concerning the salient points of interest from the children's perspective, David remarked how huge the sunflowers were—the tallest flowers in the world. The other children joined him, displaying a marked interest in these magnificent flowers. Throughout the week, the children had been studying the concept of symmetry and patterns in nature. As I drove home from Gilford, I passed another farm stand with baskets full of sunflowers for sale. I knew I had to bring them to school for the children to observe, explore, and to draw. The following Monday I brought a bouquet of three giant sunflowers with me to school. Wendy and I set up the sunflowers in our art center. After the morning events took place, we all came to the art center and encircled the flowers. We sensorily observed and explored the flowers adding the use of a magnifying glass. We touched the flowers for texture and brought the flowers up to our hands and faces to compare sizes. We examined the centers through a magnifying glass. The children observed that the flowers were symmetrical, had patterns in their centers made from the seeds, and that the leaves made another symmetrical pattern -like our math patterns. We considered why they were called sunflowers. The children explained, "It's very round, it grows so high it's close to the sun, it's gold and yellow, the sun has rays of light, and it makes you happy like the sun!" I demonstrated the use of craypas and connected craypas manipulations, using problem-solving questions and connecting to their prior knowledge of crayon manipulation and color blending while introducing the invention of textures. How could we show how big the sunflowers are? How tall? What kind of colors and textures will you need for your sunflower?



40. Sunflower with
blackbirds by Mark
October



41. Giant Sunflower by
David - was made with 6
additional stem and leaf
panels.

Jesse reminded us that because we were all artists we could make the sunflowers any way we wanted and they could be any color we wanted them to be! Stefan suggested that to show how tall the sunflowers grew, we could staple pieces of paper together and make the sunflowers as tall as we wanted. I offered choices of colored papers and white papers. "When the paper is blue you already have the sky," noted David.

Most of the children began by making a giant circle or following Kyle's idea of stapling papers together. David, Stefan, Kyle, and Kerri collaboratively helped one another to staple three sets of papers that were five feet long. Following the circle, many of the children then began coloring around the circle, making the windy sky or the sunshine while others began making patterns inside the flower center. About half of the children included the petals. Size was the most salient sensory quality. Kyle then had the idea to create a butterfly, cut it out, and collage it onto his sunflower. His idea inspired others to include not only butterflies but butterflies with proboscises (which they had been studying) because "the sunflower has so much nectar." Mark filled his sky with blackbirds "because the blackbirds really like sunflowers and fly all together" [see sample]. Some of the sunflowers were golden yellow and others were blue, red, and even violet. When we shared our sunflowers during circle, we observed how each one was different and that each artist was uniquely special. The children were extremely proud of their work and exhausted from their creating.

Connective Relationships

The practice of art enables students to develop their fullest capacities of knowing, creativity, imagination, and meaning making through direct engagement with the process of creating and experiencing in the mode of imaginative awareness and aesthetic awareness. Blumenfeld-Jones (1997) also asserts that "the primary aesthetic experience is one's attempt at making art, for it is in this activity that understanding becomes consciously embodied which is central to aesthetic experience" (Blumenfeld-Jones 1997, p.3). Art-making involves the imaginative interaction of past and present and the conscious adjustment of new and old as habituated meanings are transcended and new meanings made possible. Furthermore, it is the art from as a whole that embodies experience. "Idea and act are completely fused" (Dewey 1938, p. 278).

As the art piece unfolds, I project a possible finished work which is constantly modified by the actual making process and the resultant emerging form. The parts only cohere as there is a whole form within

which they can cohere. This image is one of oscillation, moving back and forth between the whole and the emerging work. The circle may also be construed as a spiral through which the art pieces constantly presents new wholes and new possibilities for new parts. Where I begin and where I plan to go with the development of the art piece never remain the same. New possibilities emerge through the action of making and meditating upon the making and the physicality of the art piece....In attending in an embodied way to the fusion of the personal and the social through the ongoing circularity of knowing and doing which is experienced during play, meaningful action, and art-making, we may be said to be experiencing aesthetically (Blumenfeld-Jones 1996, p. 6).

Bakhtin (1993) also suggests that the concepts of play and illusion are particularly characteristic of the connective relationships that abide in aesthetic experiencing relative to the “I” being able to experience another life without loss of diminishment of self and self-consciousness. The individual self remains consciously aware of the imagined illusion during the co-experiencing of another or other. Lowenfeld (1982) claims that this empathetic co-experiencing is an essential component of the creative process in art-making. He describes how the child, engaged in the act of making a painting of “Daddy Planting the Tree,” must be able to identify and empathize with Daddy. The key concept here is “with”. This implies both projection and reception as a state of “being-with” develops.

...while he is drawing or painting, while he is going through the creative process, he closely identifies with the subject matter. He puts himself into the place of Daddy. How strong he must be, how he was standing...and the more intensely he can identify himself with with the experience of holding the tree, the richer will be his drawing. So to identify one's self with the experience, to put one's self into the place of it, is also identical with, or a part of, the creative process... To put one's self into the place of another is one of the most basic presumptions for cooperation. If I do not put myself in your place I will not be able to actively cooperate with you. So, from the very beginning of any creative process, Johnny engages in social growth. Social growth begins with identifying first with one's own work and then by putting one's self into the place of another and recognizing the needs of others. So you see what is included in any creative process—much more than we ever would have thought. As the child is putting himself in the place of Dad, and how he is digging the hole and how difficult it is and how big his hands must be in order to be able to hold the tree, he is thinking, “Now where should I put Dad? Where should I put the tree? Where should I put the fence?...” In other words, he organizes all these different matters which he wants to represent (Lowenfeld 1982, p. 29).

According to Lowenfeld, this perceptual, emotional, experiential, and empathetic weaving during the creative process—during art-making—unfolds unconsciously as an act of creative flow. This creative flow further entails aesthetic ordering as the child, the artist, organizes the many parts of the representation into a coherent and harmonious whole. Most importantly, emphasizes Lowenfeld, during this process of aesthetic

ordering a simultaneous harmonizing ensues within the child as thinking, feeling, and seeing are woven together.

Burton warns that if the aesthetic experiences of children are divorced from the practice of art and the very meaning it holds, aesthetic judgments degenerate into a body of cold information from which to judge intellectually “good” art while critically diminishing the development of personal aesthetic responsiveness. This diminishment inhibits the individual’s ability to generalize learning from personal art to the art of others, to our life and the ways in which we form relationships in our world.

The really crucial issue, it seems to me, is will our children be able to say profound and intelligent things on their own behalf, through their artistic efforts, and, thus, be able to stretch out and actively participate in carrying forth the great tide of the culture. In our efforts to help children know about the art of Others let us not at the same time mute their own voices (Burton 1988, p. 61).

Beholding and creating are not only integral but interrelated and connected multidimensional facets of aesthetic engagement. They are not separate domains of experience but part of a larger whole.

An Aesthetic Cycle of Experiencing and Making

Transformation: From Experience to Artistic Expression

Eisner (1994) has developed a transactional model that schematically presents his understanding of the relationships involved in the transformation of an experiential encounter into a communicative and expressive form of representation (see sample). He emphasizes that “the relationship between the individual and the environment is a transactive one. By this I mean that both the qualities of the environment and the individual’s internal conditions affect the kind of experience or kinds of concepts that will be created...there is a give and take process. Each factor makes its own contribution, and out of the transaction experience is born” (Eisner 1994, pp. 47-8). He proposes a sequence of events beginning with this transaction between the individual and the environment. According to Eisner, this transaction yields experience that leads to concept formation, which leads to the need to externalize the experience using a form of representation, and then this form of representation becomes part of the qualities of the environment. I read this as a spiraling cycle of interwoven relationships: perception—sensation, conceptualization, and symbolic expression-communication. I propose a parallel model, inspired by Eisner’s transactional cycle, that represents my understanding of aesthetic perception and creative responding and that emphasizes the embodied sensory-

affective nature of the aesthetic experience- response (see sample).

The aesthetic-creative cycle begins with the individual's aesthetic encounter with the world: the aesthetic experience involving heightened sensory-perceptual sensitivity and engaged attending, which catalyze contemplation and empathetic co-experiencing (Greene 1978, Bakhtin 1993, Dewey 1938, Lowenfeld 1958, and Langer 1957). I gaze upon a copse of birch trees in the forest and my attention becomes captive. I notice how they are illuminated by the golden hued afternoon sunlight and how they sway gently in the wind...I begin to open myself to them and to these sensations... This sensory-aesthetic encounter becomes an engagement with the environment. Engagement catalyzes conceptualization. The aesthetic experience has multiple sensory qualities and affective dimensions that generate memories, associations, feelings, ideas, and relationships. More relationships and feelings are generated through empathetic co-experiencing. Responses will be unique to each individual and to each moment in time and spatial location... The birch trees remind me of swaying dancers as my own body begins to sway and I feel the coolness of the wind moving me; a childhood memory comes to me of pine trees by our summer cottage and the cool evening breezes. I can hear a faint ripple of piano and recall a line of poetry from Yevtoshenko—something about the schoolmaster walking into the white birch forest overcome with sadness and longing...the golden sun is so warm...Now the need for externalized communication and the selection of a form of representation. In order to share and communicate the meanings being gathered by this experience, some form of representation must be used, must be selected. I believe that this choosing further intensifies the ongoing inner reflecting and shaping of meanings.

This choice is dependent upon the individual's knowledge of and skills with symbol systems, the individual's intents and purposes, the sensory qualities of the experience, and the sensory qualities of the materials (Smith 1983, Burton 1988, Lowenfeld 1982, and Eisner 1994). Additionally, in the context of schools, the external encouragement or discouragement concerning choices, valuing or devaluing of selected art forms, the availability of materials, and even time constraints will influence the choosing. Yet the individual will create a representational form and this form has the possibility of continuing this cycle of meaning-making and sharing. Will I choose to express my responses and to continue reflecting upon and shaping my responses by writing a descriptive narrative or poem, by composing a piece of music, by moving my body, by painting a watercolor, by shaping a sculpture, by orally telling a story? My choice will re-present my conceptualizations and publicly communicate my understandings and awareness. My choices

will cause me to emphasize certain aspects of the experience and to diminish others that my chosen form can name and not name. Each form of representation and media/materials used within that form has sensory limitations and perceptual selectivity. So, too, the content to be held within the selected form reveals and conceals (Langer 1959 and Eisner 1994).

I love the natural world; I always have. The prints I derive from this process are a celebration of that world. Accordingly, the close observation of nature is fundamental to my work. I enjoy drawing directly from nature whenever possible and frequently carry the lithography stone with me into the woods. As I sit in silence, listening to the mysterious murmuring of the forest, drawing on the stone takes on a spiritual quality. I love the soft velvety texture of the litho crayon and the delicacy and gestural quality of drawing directly on stone. The slow, repetitive stroking of the stone with the crayon achieves a beautiful bloom which can range from silver grays to a soft, velvety black. It is my heartfelt desire to share the quiet splendor of the woods through the use of line and tone to depict nature's vibrant color by means of graduated tones of the black and white litho drawing...With my work I am seeking to convey something of the infinite quality of nature, the voices of the whispering trees, the twisting of their trunks, and the way branches and foliage shatter the glimmering sunlight. It is my sincere hope that my work will bring a small measure of beauty to our troubled world (Sandra Burke 1999, PSC Thesis Statement, Karl Drerup Gallery).

The ongoing needs of my communicative purpose and intent will further guide this shaping, yet the process of shaping will generate spontaneous possibilities of change and action for now we are in the circle of making. The form is created and made public. Meaning is made public and enters the space between I and Thou. A new relationship begins. A dialogue can begin between this utterance and others thus initiating a new cycle of aesthetic experiencing and interpreting of meanings old and new. I call this cycle the Aesthetic Cycle of Experiencing and Making.

Story: Floating Color

I have consistently observed, in my visual literacy classes, a rising level of stress and antipathy when I introduce the word "aesthetic" or "aesthetics." Even in my art education classes "aesthetic" seems to have become an alien word laden with negative connotations of incomprehensibility and intellectual elitism. How can I make aesthetic experiencing tangible, exciting, and meaningful to my students—so much so that they will wish to continue pursuing aesthetic experiencing and learning? I implement this cycle of experiencing, making, and sharing.

I provide an initiating encounter that will inspire aesthetic experiencing and will require full sensory attention (versus superficial glancing) in order to transform the ordinary into the aesthetic. I also choose the broad form of representation based upon my students' comfort levels and skill abilities: in this

situation, written words. But the genre is left open: stream of consciousness, letter, poem, free verse, narrative, descriptive observation...the first draft will be spontaneous and unworried—a source for future development. I propose to my students that the world can be experienced along a continuum with rationally practical at one end and aesthetic and metaphorical at the other. As such, watering my lawn can be perceived as a tedious functional task or an experience of magical beauty—depending upon my level of attending, my perceptual sensitivity, and my empathetic willingness to open myself to experience.

I give each student a clear eight-ounce plastic cup filled with water. This is placed before them with a piece of paper and writing tools. I ask that each student give his or her fullest attention to the water as I drop food coloring into the water. I ask for continued attention until the color is fully dispersed. Written words will be used to capture and to share their individual responses. They think that I am quite odd and eccentric—but are willing; no wrong way has been emphasized—we are experimenting—and the class is bound to be interesting. As I move through the class dispersing drops of blue, green, and red, I can observe my students deeply beholding the new world inside their cups. I hear exclamations and whispers of oohs and aahhs. I see their attention being drawn inside the cup. And I eventually hear the sound of writing (and quiet talking). My students are a little shy at first to share their writing for most of them do not perceive themselves as creative writers, but within our established community of care there is no fear of hurt or humiliation and wrong is not possible since we are exploring the possibilities of response. We discover that each student was moved by the experience, that their imaginations soared, another world was temporarily entered into, time suspended, and ideas, emotions, memories catalyzed. Through our sharing we also came to know not only the uniqueness of individual responses to the experiences, we discovered similarities and, most importantly, we came to know the inner Thou of one another.

“The blue color is dropped into the clear water. The droplets begin to melt into the clearness of the water making smooth swirls that make me feel calm and relaxed. The drops remind me of dancing fairies as in the Disney movie, *Fantasia*. My imagination runs away with me as I picture blue fairies prancing around and spreading blue color even more dramatically into the clear water. I take my pen and mix the blue into the water. At first the swirls become violent and move more rapidly the more I twirl my pen into the clear cool water. The clearness has now vanished and I am left with a sky blue that makes me think of the beautiful ocean I long for.”

“I am a complex maze with many ways to get out. I am easy to solve by looking at but not when

looking into. I have ways about me that many find very challenging but always remaining persistent for the solution. I am rough and tough on the outside but once inside the road is easy. I can deceive, perceive, and hope you believe that can achieve. I live for myself and strive to always present a new challenge. I hear people giving up all the time but the distant cheer of one who has conquered is always near. I am _____'s mind."

"I watched as the blue dye entered the water. To me it seemed to be a cloud that was pouring through the air. It looked like a swirl of color that was changing the water, the way the growth of a person and the experiences of a person turn them into someone new, the food color was doing the same thing to the water. It wasn't making the water better or worse it was just changing. As I watched the food coloring I thought of how my life has been and I realized it might get cloudy at times, just like when the color was first put in the water. But then everything settles down, just like when the food color settled at the bottom and the water was transparent once again..."

"I am a woman. I am stronger than you think. I have more than you imagine. I feel like a fighter till the end and I will fight to the end. I can survive. I live in everyone I meet. And I hear all I need to hear plus more. I am a strong and wonderful woman."

"I am a drop of food coloring in a nice cool glass of water. I am broccoli green in some places and string bean green in others. I spiral round and round like a tornado. I feel very heavy, yet float like puffy green clouds. I can remain on top or quickly sink to the bottom. I live on the surface, suspended in the water, or clumped on the bottom. I hear everything in a muffled monotone. I am a drop of food coloring in a nice cool glass of water."

Our whole group was deeply moved as we encountered each other's very special Thou during the sharing of our writing. My students had rediscovered not only deeply heartfelt experiences but also their own artistry as writers and creators. The aesthetic experience to which they had given their full attention in a situation of sympathetic co-experiencing enabled them to connect their inner nature, their artistic nature, and their knowledge. Perception was enhanced. Seeing was opened fully. Imagination was engaged. The initial vision involved many reflections and a range of associations that inspired the crafting of the public form of response. This response was shared and beheld by others, and altogether developed a new community now engaged by heightened consciousness, dialogue, and care.

The understanding of "aesthetic" for my students and teaching colleagues moved from an

abstracted and distant conceptualization (or misconceptualization) to an embodied and embraced understanding grounded in a mutually shared participatory experience-encounter. This experience further heightened the individuals' awareness of their own self-knowledge and capabilities and opened awareness for possibilities to come. No, not to come, for that implies a passive waiting—and this aesthetic experiencing involves intended attending—so, perhaps awareness of the possibilities that await their attending is more accurate. These possibilities surround us every moment when we choose to look and see.

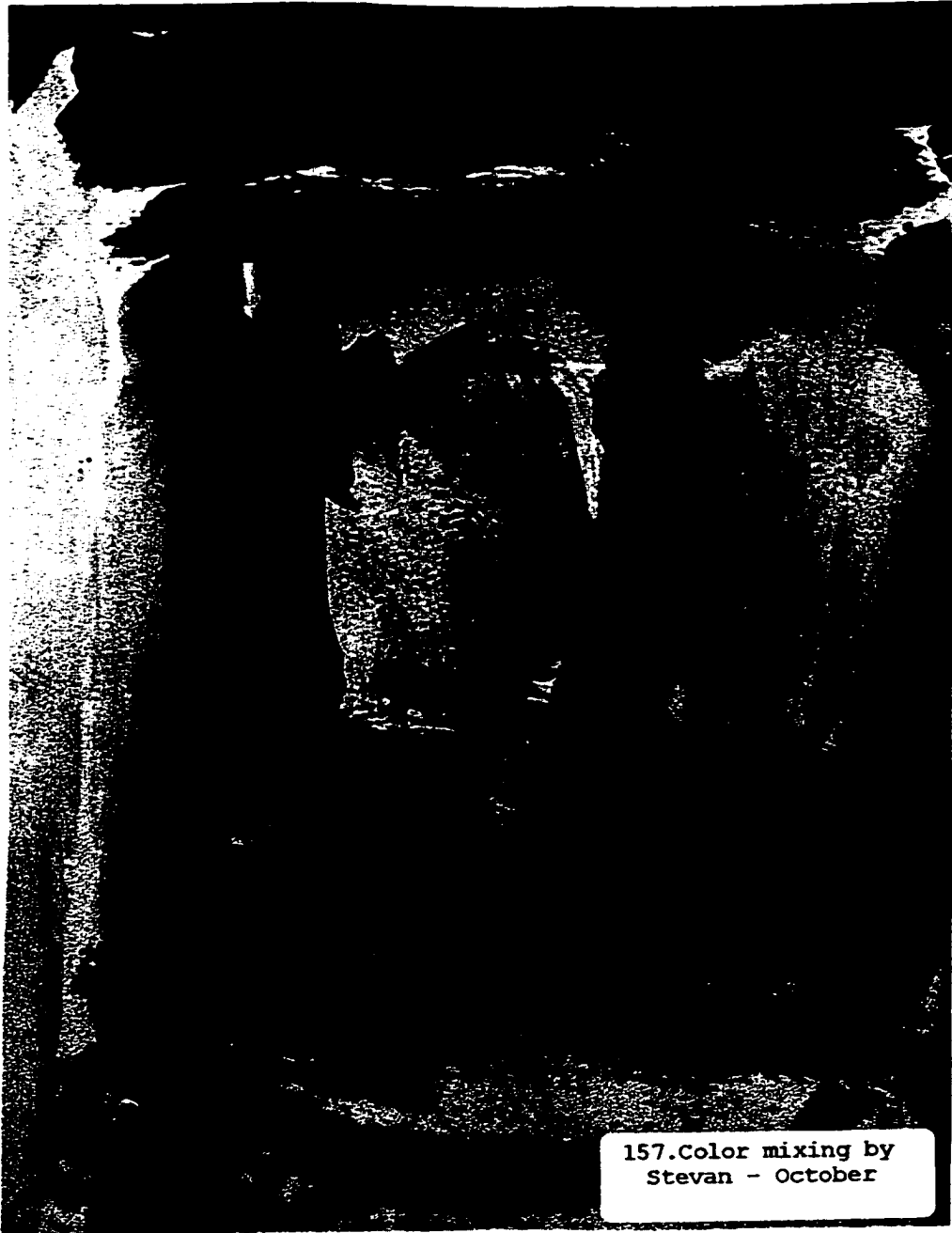
“Aesthetic experience is not only an intensified experience. It is the agent or catalyst for the imagination to blossom: for being able to see for oneself, to open spaces for choosing—for living in dialogue, and for the unsubmerging of ourselves” (Greene 1998). Greene continually calls out that imagination should be a pedagogic centrality! “Imagination prepares the things we think about” (Greene 1998) and begins with concrete, recognizable experience—the life lived on the street. We repeat this experience in our minds after the encounter. The arts offer us forms of representation to choose from with which and from which to enhance and enrich our individual experiences. These forms, when created, publicly embody and share our consciousness. Thus, the form becomes an invitation to the beholder for engaged communication. Bakhtin refers to this communication as aesthetic contemplation. Eisner refers to this as aesthetic reading. Greene refers to this as aesthetic engagement and Dewey refers to this as true “seeing.”

Story: Painting our lives

Mid-September in first grade. We are playfully exploring brushstrokes and paint, building upon the children's prior explorations of expressive lines with crayon. I have brought a few real paintings for the children to observe and touch—paintings with thick brushstrokes and textural surfaces. During the explorations, I provide guidance by asking the children to create their personal interpretations of various sensory and emotional qualities: can you make a fat brushstroke? A skinny, long brushstroke? A squishy brushstroke? Floaty, heavy, running, laughing, scratchy, smooth, wrinkly, giggling, stormy, happy, sad, peaceful, windy...As expected, the children find the interpretation of these qualities very interesting and they make their own decisions concerning interpretation and placement. The emerging paintings are rich images of overlapping layers of brushstrokes and marks. Most of the children have chosen to keep their lines discrete, except in the case of fat lines, while Terry and Michael begin to spread the paint into “filled

places,” enjoying the mashing of colors and piling of colors together into a central enclosure. Terry actually mixes a marbled tan on his palette and takes a second sheet of paper and fills it almost entirely with this invented color. Jesse interprets his brushstrokes into a tree and with HUGE confidence makes the “biggest painting” and completely fills his paper. After twenty-five minutes we organize ourselves into clean-up and I observe shared responsibilities, helping, working together, and being careful—no pushing or shoving or that’s-not-mine-I-won’t-clean-it...This sharing and collaborative cooperation is also evident during their painting as they share materials, palettes, mixes of color, brushes, water, and ideas. The paintings incorporate a full exploration of marks and brushstrokes and display vivid and energetic designs, arrangements, inventions, and metaphorical interpretations. Together we celebrate the children’s many inventions, discoveries, and interpretations.

These sensory-metaphorical explorations are followed the next day with a presentation of selected reproductions of paintings by Van Gogh that have the subject of trees. The children identify the subject matter in the paintings, observe the rich array of colors, and sensorily describe the kinds and qualities of brushstrokes. I also challenge them to consider how he made the different colors and brushstrokes, why he might have chosen to make them that way, and what the effects were of using these colors and brushstrokes. To show the kinds of trees and their bark and the textures, to make you feel the trees and the wind, to make you feel hot, to show how he felt, because he liked those colors best....Now, we are going to make our own paintings. The previous afternoon, the children had been on a field trip to a local farm. We consider our favorite places during the field trip, the salient sensory characteristics of these places, the feelings we had, and how we could use different brushstrokes and mix different colors to tell our own stories about the field trip.



157. Color mixing by
Stevan - October



36. Exploring
brushstrokes, lines,
and colors by Stevan



37. Exploring
brushstrokes by Amy -
September



38. Trees in the fall
wind by Jesse -
October/November



39. The apple tree in
the soft wind by Kerri
- October/November

Terry paints deliberate and discrete strokes up and down the left side of his picture, each time blending his colors on the palette anew. This is the first time he has not piled up his paint and blended all his colors together. He is painting very carefully, mixing colors and painting progressively and sequentially from left to right. Kyle mixes a rich orangey-red-mauve and first paints a tree to the right of his paper. He tells me that he will paint the mountain (which is behind the farm) and the little goat. He then paints a humungous mountain going off the paper to the left and makes sideways sweeping brushstrokes across the sky. The brushstrokes vary considerably yet he does not want to change the color. He then asks me for black paint so he can paint the goat. I then consult with him concerning the brush size and he decides to change to a small brush for the goat. He then paints it on the mountain—it is a mountain goat you know and there is the llama under the tree eating an apple! Amy decides to use small brushstrokes to fill the sky with color “raining sunshine” like the Van Gogh. Katlyn paints three happy pumpkins and stops. Is she done? I ask her about the sky, the wind, the butterflies, and the bees we observed at the farm. “Oh I know!” she exclaims. I then observe her brushing deep blue strokes across the sky area at the top and then she invents two different kinds of butterflies with patterns using fat, skinny, and medium brushstrokes with tiny dots. She finally adds a bumble bee hovering over a pumpkin with a large proboscis for sucking nectar. Maggie creates a giant blue tree surrounded by wind and names her painting, “The Wind Lifting the Air.”

Each painting told a unique story inspired by the sensory-emotional experiences of the field trip, the paints, and our observations of the Van Gogh paintings. None of the paintings were miniature replicas of a teacher-selected master painting as I have so often observed on the display walls of schools, devoid of personalized story. Kyle tells me, three months later, during a portfolio share, that his absolutely most favorite picture is his painting of this field trip. He remembered, “ I made the big mountain and the apple tree and then I made the llama, the mountain goat, and the cow.” Maggie also remembered her painting of the tree in the wind. “I made the leaves all crumple on this side and smooth on this side because of the wind lifting and I like it.” Amy shared her painting of the field trip at this time and the other children commented that they liked, “ the apples on the ground, the birds in the sky, the green color in the tree, the man climbing the ladder and overlapping the tree, and the blending of different colors in the tree trunk.”

Brian liked the ladder, too, and how she “used white so it would show up on the brown.”

Sensory Perception and Conceptualization

Eisner (1994) further discusses the relationships between sensory perception, conceptualization, and representation in his seminal work, *Cognition and Curriculum*. His central thesis is that,

...the senses are our primary information pick up systems and provide the context through which our conceptual life takes form... the concepts that constitute our conceptual life are images formed with the “material” that each of the senses provides, either singly, or in combination with the context of our senses. Concepts precede their linguistic transformation. I argue that language serves as one of the ways through which our conceptual life is made public. Further, I believe that representation of that life must itself employ a form of representation that is made of material available to our sensory capacities; thus forms of representation may appeal to our senses of sight, touch, sound, smell, and taste. Finally, the types of meaning that we are able to construe from the forms of representation we encounter are related both to the limits and possibilities of those forms and to our abilities to “read” them. Forms of representation both reveal and conceal. They make particular kinds of meanings possible. They give us access to unique worlds (Eisner 1994, p.ix).

Eisner calls our attention to the role of the senses and the importance of sensory perception in the inspiring of the imagination and in the constructing and shaping of meaning. Shaping is a metaphorical and idiosyncratic process rather than a literal and standardized shaping of a right product. This understanding is very important in the context of institutionalized education if we truly value our differences and uniquenesses and consider them as sources of mutual enrichment rather than as deviations from a normative conformity. The shaping of forms of representation (such as Burton’s creating of visual images using selected materials) begins with our sensory-perceptual experiences, which provide the

material for the creation of consciousness, and we, in turn, use the content of consciousness and the sensory potential of various materials to mediate, transform, and transport our consciousness into worlds beyond ourselves. In other words, forms of representation allow us to both create and enhance our private life and to give it a public presence. By making it public, we can share that life with others (Eisner 1994, p. 17).

Via these forms of representation we give public presence to our inner life and have the capability of sharing our inner life with others while others share their inner lives with us, thus mutually enhancing our understandings and possibilities for developing relationships (Dewey 1938). Through such diverse forms as poetry, music, and painting (forms Langer refers to as presentational languages) we have the opportunity to

share our stories of experience and to participate in worlds of experience otherwise closed to us. We have the opportunity to enter into another's unique vantage point and to consider their interpretation of experience. Each form of representation (Eisner also includes scientific and mathematical forms) has been infused with meanings by the unique and individual experiences of their creators. They each "perform unique epistemic functions if we are able to 'read' their content" (Eisner 1994, p.19).

As soon as we encounter aesthetic inspiration, which is the first stage of creating, we enter into that state of holistic consciousness, that fusion of felt thought, and that intensity of co-experiencing or compassionate empathizing, which catalyses individual envisionment and intentionality. The emergent expressive form will also be infused with this holism and individuality thus making such specific categorizations impossible. Especially important concerning children's art-making is the understanding that "children have no preconceived ideas about art" (Smith 1983, p.13). We, as adults, shape their conceptions through our teaching and modeling.

Children's work is related to artist's work in a more straightforward and yet profound way. In it the fundamentals of art are revealed in pure and simple form. In it we can trace the basic characteristics of art back to their psychological origins. For example, movement is an inherent property of line; speed and direction are of its essence. In the art work of children, line begins as the almost accidentally leftover trace of movement. It appears in the first gesture marks that children make. These graphic characteristics, movement and rhythm, are basic in human perception, and children begin to understand and make use of them when they are very young. In these examples and many others, children's work reveals the bedrock foundations of art, those foundations that have their sources in the physical nature of materials, in perception and human emotion, and that exist irrespective of the whims of history (Smith 1983, pp. 13-14).

Story: Butterflies

Our first graders have been observing the hatching of monarch butterflies as part of their study of life cycles in early September. Today we review our observations about the chrysalis and the butterflies. We dramatize being hatching butterflies: curling our bodies up into a chrysalis, shaking ourselves out, slowly stretching our new wings, flapping our beautiful wings and flying, landing on a flower and using



our proboscis to drink nectar... We then observe two posters depicting all different kinds of butterflies. The children observe the different shapes of the wings, different sizes, different colors, and different patterns decorating the wings. They also note the consistency of symmetry and the physiological parts of the butterfly bodies. I bring out a small box with a perfectly shaped butterfly I had discovered fallen in my garden. We handle the butterfly gently and examine her wings under magnifying glasses.

I then introduce the children to the artist Georgia O'Keefe. I share her idea to imagine how flowers would look from a butterfly's eye view and how she painted small flowers so big that when you looked at the paintings you would be surrounded by the flower—just like a butterfly. We imagined drawing butterflies so big. I demonstrated using crayons and watercolor resist with their help problem-solving and they were ready to invent their own giant-sized butterflies. Everyone made their butterfly so big that it completely filled an 18x24 paper. Each butterfly schema was completely different and elaborated with unique combinations of colors, patterns, and designs on the wings. Most of the butterflies had schematic faces with “nectar sippers” and antennae. When the watercolors came out, the children not only painted their butterflies but also continued to explore and experiment with color mixing, using various amounts of water, and layering colors (as they had done with collage and tempera paint). Jeff fell in love with a pink color created by Terry and so they shared this color. As Jeff continued to paint I observed him happily snapping his fingers and exclaiming, “ This is easy! I can do this!! I can be an artist!!” He beamed with joy and confidence. Many of the children asked to make a second painting. Amy and Katlyn painted giant flowers for their butterflies—so they could have nectar. Mark, David, Katlyn, Amy, and Terry paint directly on their second paintings, deciding to forego the crayon and immerse themselves in the joy of paint. During recess, Wendy and I hung these paintings on the wall and we created a gallery of imaginary, fantastic, gigantic butterflies and flowers. Some of the butterflies were definitely recognizable and others had become wonderful layers and colors of paint experienced to the fullest. Brian, a year later, in second grade, while outdoors painting fall leaves, made a giant red and orange and gold painting with no apparent (to the adult eye) subject. He gave his painting to Wendy telling her, “It's a Keefe.”

How different from my personal experience in an undergraduate art education methods class. I had learned how to make a butterfly stencil and use this stencil with children so that they could trace a perfect

butterfly wing onto a piece of paper folded in half. When the outline was traced over in marker it was possible to trace this onto the other half of the paper and have a perfectly symmetrical butterfly to decorate. Children could invent their own patterns inside the wings, but they must be symmetrically organized and, we were told, the children must learn how to color precisely within the lines. Even I, a professional artist, felt inhibited, thwarted, and incompetent as I undertook the making of this “art” activity. I was given someone else’s formula and rules to follow quite specifically. If I altered the rules, my image would be incorrect and unacceptable. Could this really be an art activity? Yet, how many of these butterflies do we still see in our schools?

Arrangement and Metaphor

“All forms of representation are arranged” (Eisner 1994, p.55). Arrangement is another term for aesthetic ordering, organizing, and bringing into harmonious relationship the multiple threads of each creative endeavor. Eisner uses the term “syntax” to refer to this arranging process, citing the Latin root of the word “syntaxes” meaning “to arrange.” Thus, syntax, as defined by Eisner, means an arrangement of parts within a whole. Bakhtin (1993) uses the term “architectonics” for this arrangement and the term “aesthetic” to refer to the relationships between the parts that create the whole. Smith (1983) asserts that it is this arranging and ordering that constitutes working aesthetically and artistically, for during the process of ordering and responding, relationships between thought and feeling, form and content are developed. Eisner identifies a continuum from rule governed syntax to figurative syntax. When applying rule governed syntax, arrangement is either correct or incorrect. Learning to write grammatically, learning to spell and compute, learning to play the scale on the violin—all of these activities exemplify rule governed syntax. Figurative syntax, on the other hand, does not follow prescriptive rules and is best exemplified by the creation of art forms.

What the Arts make possible, indeed what they elicit from those who use them—is an invitation to invent novel ways to combine elements. One of the reasons form changes so rapidly in the arts as opposed to arithmetic, spelling, grammar, and punctuation, is because a premium is placed on productive novelty in the arts, ingenuity is considered a virtue. In spelling it is considered a vice (Eisner 1994, p.57).

This premium on novelty and ingenuity is also a premium on individuality and diversity. Yet this does not

imply that there are no formal structures, aesthetic conventions, or social conventions that guide and influence artistic creation. This does imply that these structures are *not* prescriptive rules and that they do *not* impose uniform solutions to common problems. As we move towards figurative syntax, we also move towards personal choice, individuality, and the cultivation of creativity. We move from specificity of meaning to the ambiguity and subjective relativity of metaphorical meaning applied to both communication and interpretation. We also move from uniform answers to multiple possibilities. Dewey (1938) describes this as a poetics of meaning: art expresses and the sciences state.

Metaphorical meaning is multiple and fluid rather than fixed and rigid. Interpretation involves the inner self of each individual. The certainty of “rightness” is replaced by ambiguity. Rule governed syntaxes, in contrast, have a quality Eisner (1994) refers to as paraphrase and translation: meaning can be rephrased in varying arrangements or translations. He provides the example of $20+5=25$, $5+20=25$, $30-5=25$, $5 \times 5=25$. No matter what configuration, the meaning stays the same. There is no such possibility of reconfiguration regarding forms of representation that incorporate figurative syntaxes. The form is a unique whole that as a whole embodies meaning. The relationships and arrangements of all the component parts and elements are a unique configuration that as a consummated whole embody meaning. Even the slightest change or alteration of arrangement would completely alter the meaning and the sense of wholeness (Bakhtin 1993, Langer 1957, Dewey 1938, and Eisner 1994).

Providing our children with multiple forms of representation not only facilitates the display and acquisition of information and knowledge from diverse viewpoints; this provision enables the participation of all children whatever their developmental level and modality preference while supporting a range of syntactical opportunities. Children and teachers can move beyond prescriptive texts and right-only answers. Instead we can explore multiple perspectives, invite risk taking, share ideas and feelings, engage in the making of critical and discerning judgments, generate questions, invite ambiguity and interpretation, and open opportunities for ongoing dialogue. We construct meaning and learning, for the artist is concerned, not with conformity and habituated consciousness, but with discovery and envisionment (Wiggins 1989, Eisner 1994, Dewey 1938, Werscht 1991).

When everything is clearly specified, the need to interpret is diminished...Ambiguity, then...has its cognitive virtues. A

school culture that fosters a quest for certainty encourages dispositions antithetical to the intellectual life. Intellectual life is characterized by the absence of certainty, by the inclination to see things from more than one angle, by the thrill of the search more than the closure of the find. Forms of representation that encourage such dispositions are closer to the heart of that life than those that lead students away from it (Eisner 1994, p. 71).

Metaphorical Dialogue

Metaphorical forms of representation, especially the languages of the arts, encourage and nurture aesthetic experiencing, aesthetic dialogue, aesthetic participation, aesthetic contemplation, and aesthetic creating and cultivate caring relationships. They provide perspective-rich, sensory-rich, relationship-rich mediational tools. We invite diverse modes of thinking, experiencing, and communicating, which in turn promote diverse interpretations of meaning. Through these nonpropositional language forms our children can begin probing the interpretation of events, the seeking of significance, and the discovering of relationships prompted by their capacities to ask questions, to envision, and to co-experience empathetically.

...Through them [music, poetry, painting] students can begin to recognize intentionality and contextual influences of human representation and with questioning...identify the human voice... Hence the integration of diverse forms of representation into the history curriculum may be essential both because they provide different visions, and because students more readily see them as voices to be challenged; more readily enter into dialogue with their human creators. In drawing on non-discursive forms we may both enable students to partake in the inquiry and challenge their epistemologies (Singer-Gabella 1992, pp. 19-20, quoted by Eisner 1994, p. 70).

Art forms evoke and invoke our emotional responses as they tell our stories about our individual experiences of the world. Since they evolve from our lived experiences, the work of art can summon a sense of empathetic community and co-experiencing, which invites understanding and relationship, developed from shared meanings. “ In the end, works of art are the only media of complete and unhindered communication between man and man that occur in a world full of gulfs and walls that limit community of experience” (Dewey 1938, p. 105). Singer-Gabella’s students, by studying and engaging with works of art in a variety of forms, could hear the different voices, including the voices of feeling, calling them into dialogue and to empathetic relationship—challenging them to embody the experience of another and open themselves to an enhanced understanding of an experience of another.

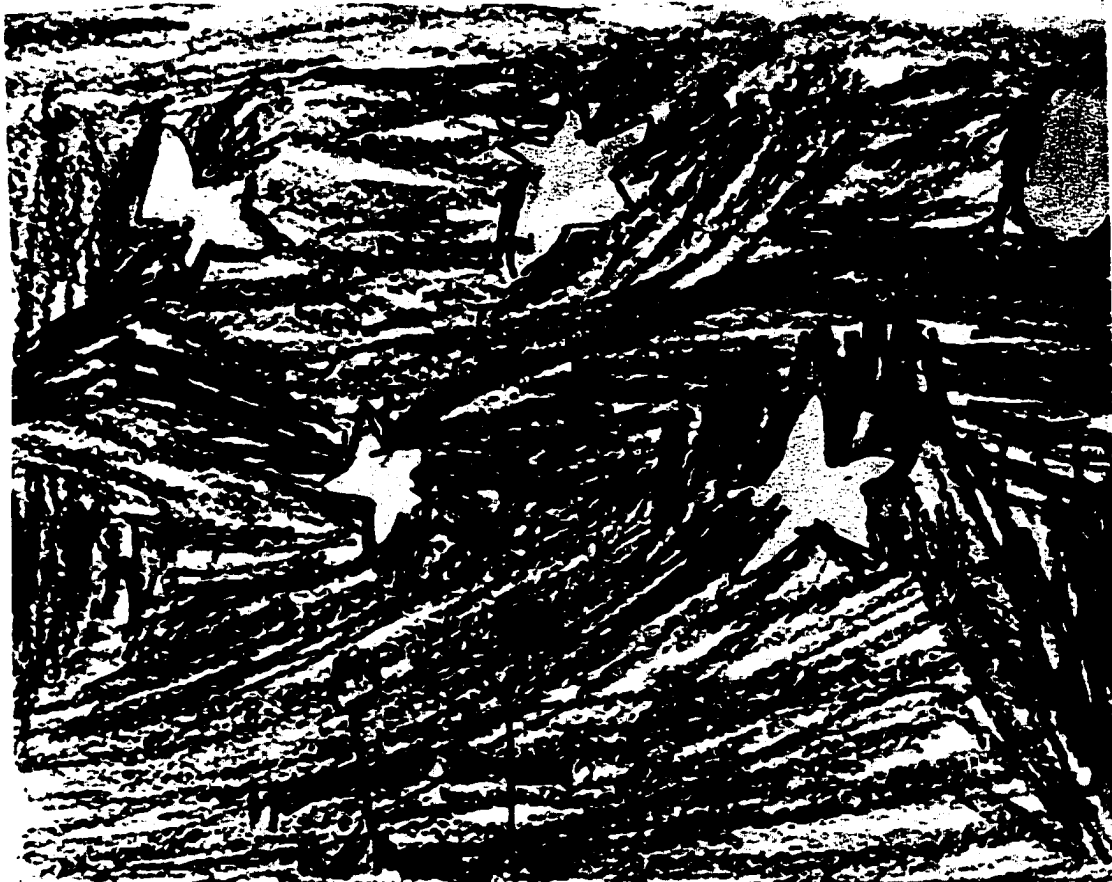
Care, relationship, and compassion are found in the poem of my first-grade student, Brian. We are imagining, "What if I had wings to fly?" as part of a larger interdisciplinary unit on birds. We have had live birds in our classroom for a week, we have drawn these birds, become birds, researched birds, read stories about birds, developed descriptive vocabulary words for birds, we have even each designed and created our very own imaginary wings...Brian imagines himself to have wings and to be able to fly. He could easily be described as the physically largest boy in our class, a rough and tumble little athlete who, at the beginning of the year, told us firmly, "flowers are only for girls!" We are writing in the springtime. Brian begins by drawing a picture of a brilliant starry night because, he informs me, he would have to be flying all throughout the night to get to where he wants to go. He wrote underneath:

If I had wings
I would fly to China and I would learn their language
I would make lots of friends and people would be
playing yellow, golden flutes.
And the sky would be all different colors
with the stars and the moon..

The desire to learn their language indicates a high degree of empathetic sensitivity and the desire to be in an understanding and caring relationship with these others. Another student, David, became fascinated by our springtime studies of insects, especially ants and bees. At this time, he was not writing at a pace with his understanding. I observed him, seated apart from the other children during writing time. He was seated in front of a glassed-in display of the interior of a real wasp nest. He was carefully making an extremely detailed observational drawing of this nest. He later drew two more highly detailed drawings of an ant colony and a beehive [see samples]. Through the use of concentrated observation and drawing he could engage with research and then communicate and share his knowledge and fascination with these insects.

Communication is the process of creating participation, of making common what has been isolated and singular...in being communicated, the conveyance of meaning gives body and definitiveness to the experience of the one who utters as to that of those who listen...the expressions that constitute art are communication in its pure and undefiled form. Art breaks through barriers that divide human beings which are impermeable in ordinary association (Dewey 1938, p. 244).

Whenever I teach, I try to cultivate and inspire this depth of meaning-making and aesthetic engagement that integrates creating and beholding. These experiences provide encounters that draw upon



If I Had wings I would fly to
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colors with stars and the moon.

1. If I had Wings by
Brian - April

and awaken the artist within each student, which in turn awakens and develops our compassionate community. As we are enabled to share our inner lives, our insights, our compassion with one another, expressed using multiple forms of representation, we can enter the meeting ground between “I” and “Thou.” Through out shared art-making and beholding we can enter into a dialogue of the heart, which cultivates care, compassion, and community.

Empathy and Engagement

Aesthetic Activity as a Catalyst for Empathy

Bakhtin (1993) emphasized throughout his writing that our sense of self and our sense of Otherness of another is grounded in the relationship between I and Thou. As he introduced language as the borderline between Self and Other, so, too, he introduced aesthetic activity as the expression of and bridge to relationship, which affirms our individual uniqueness and accepts our differences (Holquist 1993 and 1990).

So in one way the essay [“Author and Hero” by Bakhtin] can be thought of as an attempt by the young Bakhtin to provide a phenomenology of aesthetic activity in the immediacy of the relationship between the self and other, between I and Thou—that is, in the essay, Bakhtin seeks to ground the aesthetic in the inescapable relationship with others in which our sense of self is constituted and which our sense of other is constituted. In this account, the aesthetic act—the attempt to give form and meaning to another’s life in art—is a supreme form of all genuine human interactions...in which our sense of another person emerges from the distance which divides my situation from yours...various bridges which are built across can never be demolished... (Dentith 1995, p.12).

Aesthetic activity is Bakhtin’s catalyst for empathy. Artistic forms and meaning emerge between people, not resulting from isolated and alienated consciousness but emanating from and providing for ongoing multi modal and dialogic communication that provides the bridge to an enhanced understanding and meaning (Holquist 1993). The act of empathizing is a fundamental component of aesthetic contemplation for both Bakhtin and Lowenfeld.

An essential moment (though not the only one) in aesthetic contemplation is empathizing into an individual object of seeing - seeing it from inside its own essence. The moment of empathizing is always followed by the moment of objectification, that is, a placing outside of oneself of the individuality understood through empathizing, a separating of it from oneself, a return into oneself. And only this returned-into-itself consciousness gives form, from its own place to the individuality grasped from the inside...And all the aesthetic moments—unity, wholeness, self-sufficiency, distinctiveness - are transgrediant to the individuality that is being determined: from

within itself, these moments do not exist for it in its own life, it does not live by them—for itself. They have meaning and are actualized by the empathizer, who is situated outside the sounds of that individuality, by way of shaping and objectifying the blind matter obtained through empathizing. Pure empathizing is an abstract moment of the unitary act of aesthetic activity, and it should not be thought of as a temporal period; the moments of empathizing and of objectifying interpenetrate one another (Bakhtin 1993, pp. 14-15).

Bakhtin stresses that as the individual “I” engages in an act of aesthetic empathy, one’s sense of being “I” is never displaced or lost—the “I” actively projects into the object/subject of empathy and is actually enhanced through this process.

Empathizing actualizes something that did not exist either in the object of the empathizing or in myself prior to the act of empathizing, and through this actualized something Being-as-event is enriched (that is, it does not remain equal to itself) (Bakhtin 1993, p.15).

Yet Bakhtin steps back from this consideration and within the same paragraph states that,

Pure empathizing, that is the act of coinciding with another and losing one’s own unique place in once-concurrent being, presupposes the acknowledgment that my own uniqueness and the uniqueness of my place constitute an unessential moment that has no influence on the character of the essence of the world’s being...pure empathizing as such is impossible. If I actually lost myself in the other (instead of two participants there there would be one—an impoverishment of Being), i.e., if I ceased to be unique, then this moment of my not-being could never become a moment of my consciousness...(Bakhtin 1993, pp. 15-16).

Bakhtin differentiates “pure” empathy from relational and aesthetic empathy. “Pure” empathy would entail a loss of self. In contrast, relational or aesthetic empathy brings forth connection, interrelatedness, communion, and love, which enhances one’s sense of Self and Other.

...Aesthetic vision also knows, of course, “principles of selection,” but they are all subordinated architectonically to the supreme value-center of contemplation—the human being.

In this sense one could speak of objective aesthetic love as constituting the principle of aesthetic seeing (except that “love” should not be understood in a passive psychological sense). The valued manifoldness of Being as human (as correlated with the human being) can present itself only in loving contemplation. Only love is capable of holding and making fast all this multiformity and diversity, without losing and dissipating it, without leaving behind a mere skeleton of basic lines and sense-moments. Only unself-interested love on the principle of “I love him not because he is good, but he is good because I love him,” only lovingly interested attention, is capable of generating a sufficiently intent power to encompass and retain the concrete manifoldness of Being, without impoverishing and schematizing it...

Lovelessness, indifference, will never be able to generate sufficient power to slow down and *linger intently* over an object, to hold and sculpt every detail and particular in it, however minute. Only love is capable of being aesthetically productive; only in correlation with the loved is fullness of the manifold possible (Bakhtin 1993, p. 64)

I interpret Bakhtin as intending us to understand that empathy must be interwoven with love, or in

Noddings' nomenclature, care, in order to become a source of enhancement, communion, engagement, and interlocation. He also brings up a concern for the full development of self as a correlative requisite for the fullest development of one's empathetic and care capacities. If we are to project into another so as to feel their needs, to see through their eyes, and hear through their ears (Noddings 1984 and Thich Nhat Hahn 1987) we need to be able to do so with the fullness of our self. Then the self is enhanced with additional consciousness rather than the closing of one consciousness in order to enter another, and we receive in addition to projecting.

I perceive empathy as an act of subjective care. If so, empathy enhances the actualization of my being and of another's being by heightening my awareness of self, other, and world. Lowenfeld (1982) describes the precondition of having a strong understanding and awareness of self in order to be able to engage fully in sensitive acts of empathy. Let us return to the constellation of care where empathy is interwoven with the concepts of care, engrossment, and love inspired from feminist epistemology and an ethics of care.

Story: Life Drawing

I am in one of the university drawing studios. My students are drawing from the model. The model is seated on a dais in the center of the studio and my students stand working at easels that encompass this dais. We are studying the anatomical musculature of the shoulders and proportional relationships. I project two scenarios based upon my teaching experiences in life drawing classes:

Scene I: The energy in the room is uncomfortable. The students felt awkward with the model who appears tired and listless today. She poses. I walk around the room and work with students individually. I project myself as much as possible into their vantage points and viewpoints trying to see through their eyes. I check this sight by returning to my own. I try and advise them within the context of their viewpoint and my knowledge of anatomy. As I move through the room, I have gained 360 degrees of perceptual awareness and looked at the model through the multiple lenses of my students' eyes. My students also entered into dialogue with me and with other students. Their understandings were enhanced and their drawings displayed their different yet similar perceptions of anatomy and proportion.

Scene II: The energy in the room is uncomfortable. The model is tired and listless. I try to place

myself in her position and feel from within her consciousness. In order to accomplish this better, I ask her how she is feeling and give her my full caring attention. What could we do today in the studio that would help? A different kind of pose? Length of pose? Playing a certain kind of music? We arrive at a mutual decision and harmony is restored. As I work with each of my students I also give them my full caring attention. I ask questions about their personal selves and their drawings. As I project into their physical viewpoint, I also try and establish their individual emotional situation at this time—my seeing is enhanced through the lens of shared emotions and a heightened empathetic projection on my part. I try to observe the model deeply and the relationship between the model and the student's individual drawings from the situated context of their actual physical viewpoint and their emotional-intentional viewpoint. How can I help them understand their drawings and the model more deeply? I ask my students to project themselves into the model. What could she be thinking, feeling? What does it feel like to be posed on that dais? How does that pose feel in her body? In your body? Place your shoulders in that position, turn your head to match, lower your chin, sink into the pose...How does your body feel? How does she feel? Is this feeling in your drawing? Where is their frustration, fascination, ease, joy, and expressive intent? As we begin sharing our co-discoveries and co-joy (Diller 1992) of drawing an incredible synergy fills the studio. Our model, too, is a part of this energy—I know she has heard my comments regarding the beautiful grace of the pose or her incredible stillness or the lovely angle of her wrist, the soft shadow along her shoulders...she bears the burden or the joy of our attention. When the joy is present, so, too, inspiration. My students' drawings may not be so perfectly proportioned or anatomically precise today but they are full of dynamic energy and expressive intention and confidence; there is a truth and a meaning to each drawing unique to each artist.

Drawing from the live model in the shared studio space is an ongoing empathetic and aesthetic event that, I believe, must be charged with emotional care, attention, and compassion. Empathetically, I have certainly tried to project my awareness, consciousness, and attention sensitively into my students and the model throughout the duration of the class. Yet, I have never felt that I left myself, or felt myself at any lesser level of being and awareness—to the contrary, I feel fuller, enriched, and inspired. I have added a dimension of empathy. Empathy has been considered as an outward moving action—a projection into another or other. I believe that empathy also entails the opening inward of self and receiving of the other—

entails our receptivity. I asked my students to project into the model's beingness but I also asked them to bring that beingness back into their own bodies, in effect, trying to physically and emotionally embody the understandings invoked through the initial act of attentive projection and then to use these understandings to create their own unique artistic form. Our selves became enhanced as did our understandings, which were expressed through the emerging art forms, all of which were enriched through empathetic interlocation of selves, model, and emergent images.

Apprehending One Another's reality

Diller (1992) describes the concept of pluralistic co-exploring as necessitating the practice of receptive attention and receptive attending. She refers to a variety of terms used by feminist authors: Noddings' "engrossment" and "receptivity," Ruddick's "attentive love," Frye's "loving eye," Delpit's "special kind of listening," and Hoagland's "attending."

Although these authors diverge in other ways, their views on attentiveness show a remarkable convergence. they all agree that when we attend to each other in this special way, we must temporarily suspend our own projects, set aside our own agendas, and bracket a priori expectations; we do this in order to apprehend another's reality on their own terms (Diller 1992, p.3).

This depth of apprehension of another's reality, when undertaken with care and love, will enable us to change our perceptions throughout the duration of this apprehension and has the potential to give us the possibility of understanding one another in a way that enhances our relationship. We enter into an I-Thou meeting ground. Such a meeting does not erase or eliminate the uniqueness of each participant, nor necessarily diminish differences—may even heighten differences—yet will increase relationship by providing opportunities for dialogue and the development of mutual understandings.

On this construal framework, co-exploring can shift to a pluralistic search for better relationships. As co-explorers, we can work together to achieve a reciprocal understanding, we can pursue complex truths via shared inquiry, attentive to each person's account of the terrain as they travel it. If we make serious efforts to attain reciprocal understandings of each other's worlds, differences and misunderstandings will not cease to exist. Quite the contrary. We shall take differences for granted as the nature of the terrain, and accept misunderstandings as one of the inevitable hardships of the expedition. But to continue as co-explorers, does mean that we face these hardships together and that we stay with the expedition (Diller 1992, p.4).

Our consciousness expands through this journey and we do share, at times, a synchronicity and even simultaneity of responding to experience that provides us with the threads of mutual connection and the

possibility of weaving our stories together and discovering our common humanity. We can open the space for more sensitive and far deeper mutual relationships.

The Artist Within and Without

The artist is not a special kind of man
but every man is a special kind of artist.
Meister Eckhart

In the words of Maxine Greene, the poet is an exceptional human being who can remind us of

...the absence, ambiguity, embodiments of existential possibility.
More often than not they do so with passion: and passion has been called
the power of possibility... This is because it is the source of our interests
and our purposes. Passion signifies mood, emotion, desire: modes of
grasping the appearance of things...(Greene 1986, p. 427).

The poet directly engages experience. The poet plays with imagination (of self and other) and thus enlarges our framework of experience and awakens us to reflection, spontaneous responding, and the recovery of lost visions and memories (Greene 1986). Whenever Greene uses the descriptor “poet,” I immediately replace this with “artist” for whatever the art form, all the arts share these characteristics and qualities that I identify as transformation, transcendence, and translocation. The arts not only expand our awareness of lived experience, but of our innermost self. As the artist catalyses the beholder and the artist’s self to explore multiple perspective, connected knowing, and imagination, we are also all challenged to suspend objectified, quantified, and dispassionate modes of being and knowing. Greene challenges us to become poets—to become artists of “noticing, caring, naming, and feeling” (Greene 1986, p. 428). We, in turn, can also begin thinking and responding in terms of polarities, paradox, and connection and break the shackles of our mundane habituated consciousness and learn to see, experience, and know truly. The Zen garden is such an art form created by an artist utilizing living visual and spatial metaphors that generate still more metaphors and symbolic interpretations. Our challenge is not only to enter the garden but also to create new gardens in a myriad of forms using a myriad of symbol systems. Artistry and imagination may be connected to a poem, a painting, a dance, a sonata, the baking of a loaf of bread, playing with a toy, caring for our families, teaching, or helping to build a world in which each person lives in harmonious relationship with one another, one’s country, one’s shared earth, and one’s world...Artistry belongs to each of us for artistry is connecting to all parts of our self and to our world (Kent 1992 and Dewey 1938).

Every moment of our life involves responding to and interpreting experience. We have evolved a variety of symbol structures and systems that provide us with a variety of possibilities and means of understanding, interpreting, envisioning, and transforming our experience into knowledge and meaning. We are each capable of manipulating many symbol systems for these purposes: verbal language, written language, dance, music, drama, visual art, and endless variations of combination. Do you not remember that as young children we immersed ourselves spontaneously in these languages?

It takes practice
for us to recover this ability
to see, or before that, the gift
of wanting to see.

For so many years we have
been learning to judge and dismiss
-I know what that thing is—I've
Seen it a hundred times—and we've
lost the complex realities, laws,
and details that surround us.

Try looking the way a child looks
-as if always for the first time—and
you will, I promise, feel wider
awake than since you yourself
wound your own way
from the back of the house
to the front.

Try it.

Do it.

(Kent 1992, p. 15).

We are able to journey on many levels ranging from the literal and rational to the metaphorical and presentational—and perhaps beyond. Without the possibilities of our presentational discourse we lose our sense of meaning, purpose, connection, and self. We lose our awakened sensitivity and consciousness. We become closed, our voices stilled, and alienated—above all, from our self. And this alienation spreads cancerously generating more alienation from others, from community, from Nature, from spirit, and from our common universality. Without aesthetic engagement we atrophy into a society dominated by rationalism, science, technology, and spiritual death (Langer 1957, Greene 1987, Lowenfeld 1982, and Read 1967).

It is Art not science that gives meaning to life. Not merely in the sense of overcoming alienation, from nature, from society, and from self,

but in the sense of reconciling man to his destiny which is death.
Not merely death in a physical sense, but that form of death which
is indifference, spiritual death (Read 1967, p. 35).

The presentational languages of the arts provide us with bridges for connected knowing and wholeness. Recall, the purpose of the Zen garden is to provide a path to enlightenment and full knowledge via the contemplation of beauty, harmony, and paradox, which lead to inner mediation. As we need inner reflection to rediscover our history, our self, and our values (hooks and West 1991) so, too, we need reflection to open the doors of our creative spirit, our imagination—as called for by Greene and Lowenfeld, to heighten our perceptions and awareness and to reconnect with our spirit. We need languages that can penetrate us through our whole beingness—not just our logic—and that can go directly to our innermost self. We need languages that will enable us to acknowledge, understand, experience, and escape the sorrows of the human condition—to take flight in dream, imagination, and envisionment in order to find meaning, fulfillment, healing, and catharsis (Kellerman 1995). The more presentational languages we are familiar with and facile with, the broader our state of consciousness, the more sensitive our emotions, the more fully developed our whole being, and the more understanding and compassionate we become.

Every work of art is imbued with the totality of the subjective experience of its maker (Langer 1975 and Dewey 1938). I believe that this has profound educational implications. How wondrous the depth and range of interpretive insights and meanings possible to gain during engaged making and beholding: the impact of the artwork that is so charged with feeling, imagination, and perception that it takes on its own life and can transport others into a heightened state of perception, spirituality, and awareness of self. How wondrous the depth and range of personal stories, histories, insights, and dreams to be shared through such beholding and creating. For each of us is a creator. We are all artists capable of undergoing this gestalt magic, healing, and transformation of the creative process in our personal envisionment and expression of our literal and ineffable knowing and experiencing. The garden not only exists within our physical environment but also is within each of us. The key is to keep this garden alive, healthy, and flourishing.

We want to enable all sorts of young people to realize that they have the right to find works of art meaningful against their own lived lives. Moreover, because the world the arts illumine is a shared world, because the realities to which the arts give rise, emerge through acts of communication, the encounters we are enabling students to seek are never wholly autonomous or private. Moving

shared world, because the realities to which the arts give rise, emerge through acts of communication, the encounters we are enabling students to seek are never wholly autonomous or private. Moving from one's own explorations of pictorial space to a conscious encounter with a Braque painting, looking up from one's own poem to a Robert Frost or Muriel Rukeyser poem—one can always enter into dialogue with those around. The languages can be explored; the reasons given; the moments of epiphany celebrated; different vantage points articulated. Communities of the wide-awake may take shape, even in the corridors of schools (Greene, 1988, p. 150).

Story: Self-Portraits and I am Special

Our first-grade theme today is “I am special.” Our circle discussion today (second week of November) returns to “I am an artist when...” Due to our immersion in the visual arts, the children respond, when I make colors, collages, paintings, drawings...Wendy guides the discussion to same and different comparisons using Mark and Maggie as subjects. She introduces venn diagrams for the listing of attributes and qualities. The children observe physical characteristics and tiny details of clothing while Wendy elaborates by asking questions concerning their families, pets, favorite foods, play, interests, etc. What makes you special and unique? What do we share and have in common? The children begin writing and drawing in their writing journals. Kyle asks me to help him today. He is trying to write “I am special because I can draw.” Kyle has tremendous physical difficulty making letters and usually begins any writing by drawing elaborately detailed drawings that he translates into written words and sentences. (Now in second grade, he still utilizes this process for writing). He has printed “I am special because” and then the letters begin to change. I realize that he is inventing letters and spelling, filling up almost the entire top quarter of the page of paper. Then he draws a venn diagram below this writing and asks me to do same and different with him. I first ask him to read me his writing. As he reads he explains to me that he has invented his own way of writing. I know this is because he has such difficulty matching and making the letters of the alphabet. I applaud him for inventing his own alphabet and praise him for his wonderful imagination and creativity. We discuss how special and secret his personal alphabet is while considering why we also have an alphabet that everybody shares, using the same kinds of letters. Kyle then decides to write with our shared alphabet. He writes, “I can make up my own writing.”



150. Self portrait by
Amy - November



49. Self portrait by
David - November



48. Self portrait - My
ear is like a shell by
Jeff - November



47. Self Portrait by
Julie - November

Later during this day, we continue our theme of “I am special” by drawing self-portraits. We begin with a discussion of same and different regarding facial characteristics. Brian and Terry volunteer to be compared. I ask if their faces are symmetrical and the children respond, “No!” because Terry has a dimple on one side and Brian has a smudge on his cheek! I ask the boys to make a variety of facial expressions and the children note how their faces change. Brian’s face even turns bright red when he makes an angry expression! We then observe their facial features, identifying the different parts of our facial features and examining sizes and shapes and details. I ask the children to choose a partner and look carefully at each other’s faces. We also close our eyes and feel our features. We discover that everyone is unique and although our features are similar, we are each quite special. I ask them how we might draw our facial features? What kinds of shapes? What different ways could we use? They take turns drawing on a large display pad and all want to take turns sharing their ideas. We have lots of different ways to interpret our faces and our features. They invent their own ways of re-presenting our faces and contribute many possibilities. As they contribute their ideas, I observe them carefully looking at one another, discussing their ideas, and touching each other’s faces. I then bring out an oversized book of Matisse’s drawings and share with them a selection of his portraits. I have chosen them because of how he simplifies the features in a manner similar to the children’s inventions. Terry volunteers to hold the book up so everyone can see. The children observe and describe a variety of kinds of faces with different feature shapes and qualities of lines. They also interpret feelings and character qualities: she’s mad and mean, shy, happy, nice... The back cover has Matisse’s portrait of a lady with an embroidered blouse. Julie exclaims, “She’s wearing math on her blouse!”

I offer the children choices of white, gray, soft blue, pink, and yellow papers in smaller or larger sizes. The children all choose the larger size. They really liked the close-up portraits by Matisse that filled up the page. We have small hand mirrors for the children to share and I have brought special charcoal pencils—artist’s pencils for them to use if they wish. Only Maggie does not like the charcoal pencil and chooses to draw with a regular pencil. Terry asks if he can have the Matisse pictures next to him while he draws. Wendy and I step back and watch as the children begin their drawings with no help from us. We watch them peering into the mirrors, touching their faces, changing their expressions, and drawing. Jeff has figured out a way to lie his head sideways on the table, look into the mirror, and draw what he observes. His portrait is a 3/4 view of his face with an extremely detailed drawing of his ear. He tells me that there is

a hole in our ears and all the lines curve around it like a snail. He saw it in the mirror! Jesse and Terry draw two portraits. Everyone is totally absorbed. The room is actually silent with concentration. A third grader, sister to David, comes down to visit the class, and seeing the children so engaged, asks if she, too, can draw. She draws a portrait of her brother, David. Wendy and I marvel at the body awareness of self and other manifested in the details re-presented in these drawings. The children demand that these portraits join the mirrorland of our ceiling gallery. Later in the year, Terry has to move away and his portrait remains on our ceiling. The children would every so often look up, point to his portrait, and tell me, “ Terry’s still with us” [see samples].

Closure

Bakhtin’s words resonate in my memory. All our knowledge is derived from relationships with others! As previously discussed, his “other” is really “another” and is “Thou” rather than the formal and distanced “You.” His sense of “I-Thou” calls forth an intimacy of relationship and at least the proximity of being able to look deeply into each other’s eyes (Bakhtin 1993). Holquist (1989), in his forward to “Art and Answerability,” also reminds us that in traditional societies, the understanding of otherness of self has been axiomatic. He quotes anthropologist James Fernandez, “The awareness that I is another is an awareness only a self interested age obsessively concerned with the autonomy of the individual would regard as paradoxically strange and counter-intuitive” (Holquist 1989, p.xxvi). We need one another. We need to be in relation to one another to become whole. Within the tapestry of care, the core of such relationship is care. Dialogically, the means of such relationship is the constant shaping and exchanging of our unique understandings as we, together and individually, strive to achieve wholeness of perception, knowing, and meaning (Holquist 1989).

Bakhtin (1993) and Vygotsky (1978) propose that the interlocation of our selves is achieved through dialogue, through speech, through participative talking. Talking and listening occur together and reflect varying degrees of animation and participation, of projection and reception. As we enter into such a dialogue within the constellation of care, we can cross the boundaries of our situatedness and find bridges of connection and relation (Bakhtin 1993 and Dentith 1995). I ask that we remember the possibility of “talking and listening” with a *variety of forms of representation*: using presentational languages. Then, I

ask, what is the quality, the texture, the color of such talk? If our innermost selves are to be called forth to meet, where is a space for meeting? What context would move us beyond physical interlocation and distanced empathy into a space of sensitive empathy as described by Lowenfeld and a space of mutual receptivity as described by Diller? Where are our hearts during such talking? Talking must not be a talking to or at but a deeply attentive and engaged talking and listening with one another in a context of mutual respect, attention, and care. Ideally, a context of love.

When we become engaged, when we experience aesthetically, we attain a heightened level of consciousness, awareness, and perceptual sensitivity. We become capable of giving our deepest attention to one another and our world, of responding with relational empathy, and of being fully present. Then our inner selves come forth and our imagination is catalyzed. Then our innermost stories, inquiries, imaginings, beliefs, values, angsts, and visions may be called forth and shared.

In the Celtic tradition, there is a beautiful understanding of love and friendship...the old Gaelic term for this is Anam Cara, Anam is Gaelic for Soul and Cara is the word for friend...in the early Celtic church, a person who acted as a teacher, companion, or spiritual guide was called an anam cara...with the anam cara you could share your innermost self, your mind, your heart...this friendship was an act of recognition and belonging. With your anam cara your friendship cut across all convention, morality, and category...When your affection is kindled, the world of your intellect takes on a new tenderness and compassion. The anam cara brings epistemological integration and healing. You look, see, and understand differently...most fundamentalism, greed, violence, and oppression can be traced back to the separation of idea and affection.

For too long we have been blind to the cognitive riches of feeling and the affective depths of ideas. Aristotle said in *De Animus*, "Perception is ex hypothesis a form of affection and being moved; and the same goes for thinking and knowing...thinking is particularly like a peculiar affection of the soul." The anam cara perspective is sublime because it permits us to enter the unity of ancient belonging (O'Donahue 1998, pp. 13, 14, and 16).

Here, I believe, is the sacred meeting ground where empathy, meaning, awareness, and love merge to expand not only our consciousness but also our hearts and our whole beingness. The arts and the many diverse forms of representation offer bridges to this meeting ground. Our stories that we find and share through the arts fill the space of this meeting ground. Our capabilities of aesthetic experiencing inspire us to create these stories and provide us with the sensitivity to listen to each other's stories. We *can* build these meeting grounds and find our sense of belonging within our self and within our relationships to others and to our world.

**COMPOSING COMPASSION:
DEVELOPING CARE COMMUNITIES VIA ENGAGEMENTS IN THE VISUAL ARTS**

BY

CYNTHIA WORTHEN VASCAK

Baccalaureate Degree Pan American University 1986

Master of Fine Arts Boston University School for the Arts 1988

DISSERTATION

Volume II

Chapters VII - Appendix

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

December, 1999

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computer parts of a scene... and rearranged into the original sentence, glued onto the page, and then illustrated with pictures... Wendy's an detective to ditto of I can and the classic cut and paste



I CAN SEE A FIRE TRUCK
I see a big hose spray!
I can see a fire truck
and an ambulance

CHAPTER VII

COMPOSING AND LIVING THE COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY

Introduction

I believe that our schools and classrooms can become the compassionate communities that I have endeavored to describe throughout this scholarship. This is my vision of possibility. However, is such a vision *really* possible? Can such a vision be implemented in real schools? How? Under what kinds of conditions, situations, and contexts? What is needed? How to begin? These are critical questions of practical concern, which need to be addressed if we are to journey from contemplation and envisionment of possibility to actualized and ongoing transformation. I shared my vision with Wendy Oellers and Gilford Elementary School. Wendy and I worked together to actualize this vision. Here is the story of our efforts.

I begin with the palette, re-emphasizing the three main strands that comprise the conceptual framework of this vision: the development of empathy and self-care, the development of engaged attending and sensitized perception, and the development of multivoiced/multilingual dialogue—all infused with visual arts engagements. Growing from this framework, I present the development of our vision: sketching and shaping a detailed picture of the teacher, the classroom, the atmosphere, and the curriculum. This picture provides a contextual understanding of our location and situatedness from which others may find connections and develop their own inspiration. This picture leads us to ongoing change and development as we move towards the transformation of the classroom into a studio/gallery and center of care. These descriptions of context move to pedagogical practice: my participation and modeling, and the applied practice of engagement and dialogue. The children are then introduced, providing the center of our concern, for they are the heart of our teaching and our care. Thus, I gradually shift attention from the conceptual framework to the practical concerns of location, pedagogical action, and actual transformation within an actual school with actual children. Through this story, I offer as detailed a view as possible of our composing process, and the consideration of the multiple factors, which influenced our composition.

Preparing the Palette: Three Elemental Strands

Explicit Care

The children's lives take center stage. "What they think and feel and wonder about is central to what this place called school is all about" (Belcher and Jaffee 1998, p.13). As teachers, we are practitioners of care. As practitioners of care, we give care to our students. We attend to their holistic needs, capabilities, and interests. What is of importance and concern to our students becomes important to us as care-giving teachers. This means welcoming, including, and confirming each individual student in his or her fullness: welcoming his or her inner self, and seeing each student as "Thou" and not "it." We are present to the other, we receive the other, we recognize the other, and we give our care to the other (Noddings 1984).

I must see the cared-for as he is and as he might be—as he envisions
His best self—in order to confirm him. The attitude that is perceived by the cared-for as caring is generated by efforts of the one-caring at inclusion and confirmation. It is an attitude that both accepts and confirms. It does not "accept" and shrug-off. It accepts, embraces, and leads upwards. It questions, it responds, it sympathizes, it challenges, it delights (Noddings 1983, p. 67).

A primary concern of the teacher is the nurturance of the well-beingness of each student, the development of his or her capacities of care, and facilitating his or her fullest growth and development. Meeting our students with care enables us as teachers to ascertain and address their needs, to begin preparing the path for their journey of learning and living. Noddings (1984) emphasizes that the "Thou" of each student is more important than any subject. I believe that the meeting of "I and Thou" is a fundamental necessity for the beginning, the sustaining, and the continuation of our children's lifelong learning and living journey within school communities and beyond.

Bringing care and relation to an explicitly central position within our schools is fundamental to the actualization of such an undertaking. I have been advocating a vision of compassionate community that I believe is possible to achieve in our classrooms and that, I believe, has the possibility of nurturing and cultivating these essential "I-Thou" relationships. Within this vision, care moves from a submerged and camouflaged shadow, treated with attitudes of patronization and condescension, to an explicit and pivotal position of clear centrality and value within the classroom culture. The teacher is an identified practitioner and modeler of care and connected teaching (Martin 1992, Belenky 1986, and Noddings 1983).

This vision of compassionate community is composed from a palette of three interrelated essential strands: 1) the nurturance and development of our capabilities of empathy and self-care, 2) the nurturance and development of our capabilities of engagement and perceptual sensitivity, and 3) the nurturance and development of multivoiced, multilingual (presentational and representational forms of language) dialogue and communication that facilitate meaning-making and the telling and sharing of our stories. Within this dialogic strand, I have focused on the infusion of the visual arts and engaged art-making. All these strands together weave a tapestry of connected and interrelationship. Together they provide mutual support and enhancement for the growth and development of care and compassionate community for our students.

Polyphony: Multivoiced and Multilingual Dialogue

Developing multivoiced and multilingual dialogue and communication is an acknowledgement and confirmation of each student as an individual and of his or her unique capabilities of contributing to and enhancing our community. We welcome a polyphony of voices, viewpoints, and perspectives. We acknowledge the relativity of each individual's situatedness and continually try to cross the boundaries of our own situatedness as we journey into new territories with open minds—and open hearts. My goal is the enhancement of understandings, the expansion of awareness, and the ongoing opening of possibilities, which ultimately leads towards care, mutual respect, and connection. In order to practice such a dialogue as fully as possible, each individual must be enabled to “speak.” “Speaking” may take many forms and utilize many languages: not only cultural dialects and verbal language systems, not only representational languages, but also the presentational language forms of the expressive arts and forms such as body and gesture and sign. In so doing, we further acknowledge the diverse needs and capacities of each individual relative to choice of language modality and form of communication as we enhance and expand the kinds of expressions made possible. We invite heart, body, mind, and spirit.

This invitation to express inner concerns, feelings, questions, and ideas invites our students to speak their whole mind and heart (Noddings 1983, Rogers 1998, Eds. Woynshner and Gelfond). As we simultaneously invite the arts, and in the context of this scholarship, the visual arts, into our dialogue, so, too, we invite the uniqueness of each individual. Visual art is a form of language, which can be uniquely utilized by each individual—having no absolute rules of syntax (Eisner 1994)—yet is universally transposable to others. Even interpretation is permeated with meanings and associations constructed from

the beholder's experience that further enhances possibilities for finding mutual connections, developing understanding, and nurturing empathy. Visual art-making and beholding offer the opportunity of not only inventing highly personal symbols but of engaging in metaphorical, interpretive, and creative processes. When we value and practice these processes, we cultivate an acceptance of ambiguity, the unconventional, and the unpredictable. We open the doors to the unexpected, to diversity, and relativity. As we offer such plurality of language and valuing of individualized expression, every child has the capability of participating as a speaker and as a listener—as a maker and as a beholder.

Dialogue also includes story and story remains a fundamental means of communicating our thoughts, insights, feelings, and experiences to one another. As described earlier (chapter 6), story is an important way for peoples across time and culture to reflect upon, order, organize, and make sense of our life experiences. As we share stories with one another, we come to know ourselves, each other, and our world (Olson 1998, Witherall 1991, and Cole 1989). Due to the telling and sharing of individual stories, which entail an individuality of situatedness and the use of multiple forms of expression, we begin to cross the boundaries of separateness and have the opportunity to develop connection and relationship with one another. We weave a path of meaning-making, reflection, and understanding, which is also a path towards the compassionate community.

Engagement and Perceptual Sensitivity

Listening and participating in such dialogue requires engaged attention and sustained perceptual awareness. Art-making involves the heightening of one's consciousness, enhanced perceptual awareness, and engaged attention. As London reminds us (1992), we need to return to the use of creative process and the consideration of art-making as a process of transformation of consciousness and meaning-making. This transformation enables the shift from the mundane habituated consciousness to a state of heightened perception, sensitivity, connection, discovery, and envisionment (Greene 1995 and Kent 1992). We open ourselves to the wonder of the world around us—the world of nature, ideas, things, and each other. As we become so engaged, we not only draw closer to the greater world of nature but to our inner nature and inner self. This is the inner self, capable of reaching out to others and finding relationship.

Boundaries are crossed again. In order to fully perceive our world and one another we must give our full attention and become engaged. Engagement also connects to our capacities of critical

consciousness: the apprehension of experience that entails deep looking and “seeing” accompanied by the creative exploration of possibilities of interpretation, the reconsideration of contexts, and the asking of “what if?” (Friere and Macedo 1987). The engagement of our sensitized perceptual attention further catalyses a cycle of empathetic projection, responding, associating, remembering, and imagining, which in turn catalyses the inspiration to create and communicate using multiple forms of expression (Eisner 1994, Dewey 1934, and Lowenfeld 1958). Again, we invite possibility and envisionment into our classroom as we invite the discovery of connections and relationships.

Empathy and Self-Care

The capabilities of reaching within one’s inner self, of drawing closer to our inner nature and becoming sensitized to the inner nature of other’s leads us to Empathy. Lowenfeld (1958) continually emphasized that the greatest mission of education is to cultivate each individual’s creative-artistic-empathetic potential. These capabilities guide our search for self and relationship. Empathy involves being able to imaginatively project our consciousness into the perceived reality of another followed by the return of that heightened consciousness within our self. We gain insight and understanding as we try to apprehend the experience of another and/or other as deeply as possible and bring these understandings back within our self. Such imaginative projection and receptivity requires perceptual sensitivity, heightened awareness, engagement, and attention.

Lowenfeld adds that this projection further involves a unity of thinking, feeling, and perceiving deeply. We enter into relationship with another and this relationship is between “I and Thou”. We become engaged in the act of trying to fully apprehend and become engrossed in the reality of the other. As we do so, we cultivate care and relationship. Care addresses our most human need of being cared-for and of being able to care for others. This need incorporates the reciprocal capabilities of being understood and understanding, giving and receiving, being respected and respecting, and being recognized and recognizing. We also, when caring-for, act in the behalf of another.

Weaving care and empathy together creates the caring imaginative projection of consciousness and an interlocation of relationship. Such a multidimensional being with another requires and enhances our perception, sensitivity, and consciousness. A key component of our empathetic sensitivity is the ongoing development of self-awareness, self-sensitivity, self-confidence, and self-harmony—all elements of what

Noddings terms Self-Care (Noddings 1984 and Lowenfeld 1958). This development of self-care and awareness is fundamental to being able to speak out and tell one's story, to engage in dialogue, and to develop the courage to speak one's mind from one's heart (Macedo 1987 and Rogers 1998). This developing sense of self and self-care is also an important inner grounding and, ideally, sense of self-grace and harmony. Because of my sense of self and self-love, I can return to my inner self.

Wendy Oellers and the Art of Teaching

The art of teaching is embedded with the practice of care. Because the teacher is the visionary, the artist, and the weaver of the compassionate community, it is vital to be able to "see" this teacher, to "see" the art of their teaching and connect this teacher to personally situated experiences and understandings. Here is a vivid glimpse of Wendy who, I believe, embodies the art of engaged and compassionate teaching.

The art of teaching invites teachers to have children participate in the construction of their identities in classrooms. The art of teaching acknowledges the investment of the child's family in that child's identity. As an artist in the middle place, the school, the teacher weaves together a process that works with family names, society's names, and the child's own fictive sense of his or her own possibilities. Names become fluid and changing, they are projected in different media—in costume, in mask, gesture as well as language. Children are invited to bestow names on each other and to transform the names they have are given. What you call yourself and what others call you becomes drained of its toxic objectification, as it becomes a protean digestion...

The art of teaching recognizes that every curriculum is an improvisation on this first order...the art of teaching recognizes all order as arbitrary, unavoidable, and hospitable to interpretation and creativity...Order becomes perceptible as we invite children, families, and colleagues to join in the shaping of a meaningful world. The art of teaching invites us to play with the material...The art of teaching recognizes that each student brings a history of relation to each classroom moment and engages in the history of learning...It is work in a community (Grumet 1993, pp. 206-7).

Pema Chodron, a Buddhist teacher at Gampo Abbey, was interviewed by Amy Gross (1999). In this interview she discussed student and teacher relationships.

Working intimately with a teacher is the same as learning to stop shielding ourselves from The completely uncertain nature of reality....we make an unconditional commitment to hang in there, we do not run away from the pain of seeing ourselves—and this is a revolutionary thing to do and it transforms us. But how many of us are ready for this? One has to gradually develop the trust that is ultimately liberating to let go of the strongly held assumptions about reality...the teacher serves as a mirror but also encourages your ability to trust in yourself (Gross, 1999. p.46).

She continues to describe the teacher-student relationship as one that evolves into a relationship of trust and love and the acceptance of imperfection: the whole student is accepted and reciprocally, the whole teacher is accepted, each with their imperfections and essential goodness. Although Chodron is speaking of the

teacher-student relationship within the context of Bhuddist spiritual guidance and between adults, the concerns of trust and acceptance relate directly to the teacher-student relationship in our classrooms where the teacher seeks to cultivate compassionate community

The foundation of Wendy's teaching is her concern for the building of caring relationships and community with children. Our shared belief that such community is the touchstone for learning and living brought us together.

A strong sense of community is the foundation for our classroom model. It has proven to be the vital component that encourages risk-takers. The children are not afraid to fail. There is no ridicule, only reassurance and the understanding that failures are part of the process of learning. Our experiences demonstrate how the vital component of community can be strengthened by:

1. Rules, routines, and rituals,
2. Curriculum design,
3. Problem-solving through collaboration,
4. Recognition and valuing individual talents, and
5. awareness of the social dynamics in the room...

(Oellers 1997, pp. 39-40).

The core values in Wendy's classroom community are *kindness and care*. . . Class rules reflect these values: being kind to one another, being responsible, no hurting of feelings or bodies, being good listeners, taking turns, and working together to keep the room clean. Although a clear daily routine is structured, the schedule may be flexibly modified and improvised to better meet the needs of learners and learning, flowing with dips and turns and currents rather than driving evenly forward. Wendy cherishes and cultivates the individuality of each of her children inviting their histories and their stories as they develop new relationships, collaborations, and means of constructing learning together.

Valuing Individuality and Diversity

Wendy's knowledge and experience gained through her research and use of Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory in her classroom provided us with an immediate bridge of understanding for consideration of the arts as languages and as essential forms of expression and understanding rather than as elite "talents". This *bridge* was very important to our relationship. Too often I have observed Multiple Intelligence theory used to delimit children—"This child is my verbal linguistic talented one and this child is my mathematical, Susie is my verbal, etc...." Ironically, such well-intended labels proscribe boundaries around each child. Most importantly, I wanted to shift Wendy's attention away from such specific categorizations. I did not want to label or name the children according to any proscribed set of intelligences. I was concerned with how labeling becomes internalized by children and may actually hinder

the fullest range of ongoing exploration and inhibit growth along this fuller spectrum of possibility.

Labeling, I was afraid, led to rigid naming and the prevention of fluid and changing sense of self-possibility, too often becoming as Grumet describes, “toxic objectification” (Grumet 1993, p.206). I wanted to use the idea of diverse modalities, languages, intelligences, and ways to experience and make meaning of experience through diverse forms of representation in relation to the diverse needs of individual children. In addition to diversity, I suggested combinations of diversities, thus expanding the possibilities of diversity even more. Such expanded diversity, I emphasized, offered multiple pathways for multilingual and multifaceted growth and development within, across, between, and beyond any preconceived boundaries.

Wendy agreed. She regarded “talent” as the different kinds of interests, different kinds of skills, different kinds of capabilities, and different kinds of their combinations, which made us each a special individual. As she valued these differences, she helped her children to discover and value their different kinds of talents, which she referred to as “smarts.” To this, we added the dimension of diverse combinations of capabilities in progress, needs, and interests—with fluidity, without boundaries, and with changing combinations of possibility for each child. As such, all her children were and are talented and smart in their own individual ways, which are not fixed but open doors; and they could not compare themselves to a standardized norm of talented or smart. As Corita (1992) would say, we were all artists of life.

In addition to increased understanding, teaching children about the different intelligences leads to an increase of the child’s self-awareness and self-esteem. Community members are valued for their individual talents and successes are demonstrated in a variety of ways...Early in the year, I introduce Gardner’s concept of “different kinds of smarts.” The children became familiar with the concepts of “word, math, body, music, spatial, people, and self smarts”...Recognition of the “smarts” of others led to respect and validation for group members (Oellers 1997, p. 53).

Wendy’s emphasis on individuality of talents-smarts and their diverse possibilities of manifestation, has guided her to teach concepts and skills through a variety of modalities. These values easily translated to the offering of a range of expressive forms as a means of demonstrating and sharing learning and understanding: literature, poetry, creative movement, and music. We now added *visual art*. What would a “curriculum” look like infused with these multiple languages and concerns of care?

Curriculum Planning and Improvisation

Wendy's curriculum design is interwoven with her concerns for community. Community and friendship are essential concepts, which are introduced at the beginning of the year in a foundational thematic unit and are then continually threaded throughout all subsequent units of study. I was particularly interested in how the enhanced integration of visual art would impact the development of a compassionate community and what constellation of factors would support this integration. What would the impact be in Wendy's class? Since Wendy is continually seeking ways to vary and enhance learning experiences and community, she was profoundly interested in deeply exploring enhancement possibilities within the visual arts.

Curriculum stands for the relation of the knower to the known. As a teacher I mediate that relation. I stand somewhere between the student and the forms of knowledge, the content of the curriculum. As the etymology of "liberal" reveals, knowledge is power and the word is a Second-order expression of the act. Goethe had Faust make the same Distinction when he declared that in the beginning was not the word. Mind, or power, but the deed. Thus, I stand between the student and the action, for forms of knowledge are not things in themselves, but the residue of human action. What the etymological archeology reveals is that the word is merely an abstraction derived from action in concrete situations, fathers and children, and love, masters and slaves, and work—then books...our pedagogical dilemma is to rescue the forms of knowledge from the autonomous life they assume and to make them the grounds for our action rather than our acquiescence (Grumet 1978, pp. 38-9).

Wendy designs interdisciplinary thematic units, which revolve around experiential, life-connected activities and themes. These activities reflect her concerns for children's individuality of situation, relevancy of learning, and the building of their self-confidence. I added the children's senses of empathy, artistry, and agency. Wendy tries to ensure a diverse variety of kinds of learning experiences that will offer the children multiple ways to make meaning and to demonstrate their understandings while being tied to the local S.A.U. and state frameworks. Wendy describes her approach to planning using her Amphibian unit (see appendix) as an example of her interdisciplinary thematic approach to curriculum design. Since this unit exemplifies the kinds of units designed and implemented during our work together, I share her explication of process and intent. Within this explication, one may note the absence of direct encounters with visual art-making.

Amphibians is a required unit of study for our primary grades. The first Step I took was to determine all the ways I could observe my students Understandings of concepts about amphibians. Included were ways that supported MI and learning styles. Once the assessments were determined, I wrote the outcomes and skills needed. These outcomes reflected both

Scientific concepts about amphibians (essential knowledge) and the critical skills of communication (written and verbal), collaboration, and Research.

When the assessments and outcomes were clarified, I used a web chart to plan out activities and challenges that engaged the different Intelligences and skills. I found this clarification made the process of planning much easier. In targeting specific skills (i.e. identify characteristics of an amphibian), I had to reflect on ways I could tap into The different intelligences for both assessment and my mode of instruction. Once these ways were determined, it was much easier to find activities that would support them. As the activities were listed, I began to see how some of them, like venn-diagrams, could utilize several intelligences at once....

To increase the depth of meaning, I wrote the curriculum on amphibians so that it would flow throughout the day. We were fortunate to have a viviquarium in our room, which was the residence for an assortment of amphibians, fish, and reptiles. Reading and language arts revolved around amphibian stories. The children read fiction and non-fiction stories and compared animals in venn-diagrams. The "Frog and Toad" series was one literature source of characters that the children used to compare with our resident amphibians. The children used their "picture painting" (adjective) words from our poetry writing to write their scientific observations. They wrote amphibian stories and poems. Math activities were also tied to amphibians. Amphibians remained the focus for our days, from story problems to measuring the leaps of our animals. I wrote the lyrics to a song by the Beach Boys and used music to reinforce the facts. The children performed it in front of the whole school. Containing the facts they had learned, the children sang, rocked, and rolled to the "Amphibian Rock". Seasoned performers, they delighted in the enthusiastic reaction of the audience (Oellers, 1997, pp. 60-61).

Key design components that facilitated the use of the visual arts were Wendy's sensitivity to diverse modalities and intelligences, her willingness to consider learning as a flow throughout the day, and her connecting and application of concepts and skills across traditional discipline boundaries.

Wendy's assessment practice reflects the academic, critical, and social skills addressed in her outcomes and her key questions of what the student needs to know, to do, and be like. She addresses essential knowledge from frameworks, critical thinking skills, communication skills, collaboration, and research. Outcomes are assessed by Wendy and the children. Each unit involves diverse forms of research, challenges, and presentations. Quality work is discussed as a whole class. The children select samples of quality work and hurried or careless work to compare and analyze. They discuss variables and standards for quality work, generating their own criteria for quality. When their work is completed, the children are given two de-briefing questions to answer regarding their work, using these standards as reflective guides: What went well? What could have been done differently to make it better? These reflections are followed with, What will I do next time?

The children and Wendy provide a dialogic critique that is constructive, encouraging, rigorous and caring. Through such a critical and reflective assessment process, children learn the skills of critiquing their

own and each others works while learning that there is always the possibility for taking questions and ideas further. The children are able to see their own growth and development, to have confidence in their abilities, and not to have to compare themselves to a standardized normative outcome to feel successful. Evaluation is confirmational and inclusive (Noddings 1983). The self is valued, challenged, and confirmed. As a formal means of documenting each student's learning, growth, and development, Wendy utilizes running records, student self-assessments, conferences, and portfolios. She is required to conduct a specific amount of standardized testing including the basal and the Gates Macginnite Reading Tests. However, these standardized tests are only one part of a larger portrait of each learner

Curriculum, as such, becomes a never-ending artist's canvas to be shared with the children. Wendy approaches her teaching as a mutual quest for the discovery of more stories, facts, information, skills, ideas, feelings, and questions. What do we want to know? Know more about? What questions do we have? What do we wonder about? How do we feel? What if...? Could we...? Imagine...? Learning is pregnant with possibilities, imaginings, wondrous information, and inspiration. Knowing is multimodal, multifaceted, diverse, contextual, experiential, shared, constructed together, and connected to the heart.

Space: Transformation of a Classroom into a Studio/Gallery and Center of Care

With such an abundance of sensitive pedagogy in place, what would need to be changed or altered in order to invite the visual arts and to enhance the opportunity for our three strands of compassionate community to flourish? We began by examining the space and location of the classroom.

Climate becomes the invisible teacher in the classroom, establishing the foundation for the intellectual, social, and emotional development of the child. We believe that the most effective classrooms convey a sense of order through an environment that is predictable in its schedule and management, as well as in its tone. The security of this environment establishes the foundation for intellectual exploration and risk-taking so necessary for active learning...

When teacher and children come together the first day of school, they begin to create a classroom climate. The perceptive teacher listens to the children, observes the ways they learn, and finds a variety of strategies to engage children in learning, thus establishing a nurturing climate. Slowly, and carefully, teacher and children build a predictable yet fluid structure, within which there is a sense of order as well as freedom of exploration and open interaction. Teacher and children respect and value each other in this climate, as they continually shape a community in which individuals flourish as well as participate as integral members of the group (Jones and Lunsford 1989, p. 13, cited by Avery 1993, p. 32).

Could our classroom become a studio of creativity and a gallery of celebration filled with ongoing opportunities for engagement, story-making and sharing, dialogue, and the practice of care? Could both the physical environment and emotional environment of our classroom be transformed into a creative studio

and into a holistic center of care and compassion? This would entail a transformation of space and a reconceptualization of the classroom as a conventional structure within the school institution. The classroom needed to be transformed into collaboratively shared artists' studio permeated with care. I use the metaphor of the artists' studio for representing a space for risk taking, exploring, and finding connections and relationships, creating, imagining, encountering, and revealing one's inner self. It is a space designed to invite engagement, contemplation, inspiration, and creating. Yet, it is also a space without boundaries located primarily within our belief in ourselves as artists and the world as being infinitely wondrous. How intricately connected the spaces of inner self, care, and studio. How to bring the qualities of such spaces into a classroom?

This is unabashedly humanistic, child centered pedagogy. It is exactly
What artists and all original, inquiring minds do. The artist's studio
Is not animated by lessons imposed by others! The artist's studio is
characterized by creative responses to a "witnessing" of some aspect of this stunning
world (London 1994, pp. 30-1).

How could we bridge the traditional boundaries between academic settings and the "real" world of nonacademic experiences? We needed to do so in order to facilitate such witnessing and the "making the central issues of their [the students] lives accessible to them for interpenetration and understanding" (Salvio 1994, p.420).

The Physical Space of the Room

Wendy and I addressed questions of how to transform the physical environment of the structured classroom into a working studio space. We began by assessing the physical structure of the classroom. We walked into her classroom during the third week of August having only the materials and facilities at hand—not our wish list of space, supplies, equipment, furniture, and extra support. The room was a long rectangle, with a wall of windows, another wall that was really a folding door into another classroom (and had to be kept accessible due to fire codes), an entry doorway with coat racks and cubbies at one end and the sink area and bathroom at the other (see diagram). Near the sink area was a strip of linoleum—the wet area. Along the edge of this area was the one wall with a bulletin board and a dry erase board. Half of the wall opposite the exterior windows was another long window viewing the school hallway. There were three electric outlets: two in one corner of the room and the third in the opposite corner by the entry doorway. (I mention these since certain resources require electricity and the location of outlets can become a

consideration when planning learning centers). The furniture was an interesting assortment: one long working table, one thin, long working table, a semicircle conference table, eight interlocking diagonally faceted tables, two circle tables, two large storage cabinets, eight bookcases, two circular bookracks, one open shelved cabinet for paper, one easel, one aquarium on a stand, and two terrariums. We also had to plan for one computer station. Bare walls and books were everywhere!! Since I have traveled to many schools across New Hampshire as a supervisor of student teachers, I would describe this room as an average classroom with typical facilities and space frustrations. We also had ourselves, our experiences and ingenuity, and the world outside our classroom.

Inspiration and Invitation

I remembered Carol Avery's (1993) descriptions of her preparations for the beginning of the school year and her desire to create a richly inviting and inspirational environment. She was torn between her tradition of fully decorating and preparing her physical environment and the question of simplification relative to letting the "decorating" develop from the children.

After nearly two weeks of unpacking, arranging, and decorating, I had my room ready for the arrival of twenty-eight first graders. My preparations for the opening of school were akin to those of an expectant mother preparing a nursery ...Looking back, I realize that the glitzy appearance of my classroom rivaled the fast paced stimulation of Saturday morning television cartoons...Looking back, I realized that all the preparations for school focussed on establishing a classroom that belonged to me.....As I planned a learner centered classroom, I moved from interior decorator to professional decision-maker. Now I prepare for the opening of school by anticipating what the children and I need for smooth operation of our learner-centered classroom (Avery 1993, pp. 61-3).

We, too, wanted the children to enter into a sensorily inviting and inspirational environment. Wendy began pulling out her grand collection of visual posters and learning supports. I began to observe not only an overwhelming array of colorful words, pictures, and decorations, I began to observe how all of the posters and visuals, or so it seemed to me, incorporated very detailed photorealistic or cartoon-perfect imagery that would surround the children in a world limited to one very narrow view of visual art created by professional adult illustrators and marketed by educational resource companies. Putting up all these visual resources would also completely fill the walls of the room. What would happen if we really limited the use of visual supports to those most informationally needed (alphabets, numerals, and calendar) and let the walls and the room wait for the children's own art. Let the children create their own gallery? Could we

create a gallery celebrating the children's art-making and surround ourselves with their understandings and expressions?

I shared my question with Wendy. This would be a very different looking classroom to enter into. Perhaps too empty? However, what an invitation for them! We decided to trust in the children's innate creative capabilities and our knowledge of children. Still, the room could become far more warm and inspirational—more aesthetically sensitive and learning centered—through the arranging of furniture, the organizing and setting up of inviting learning centers, the texturizing of our space via the use of fabrics, small rugs, and living plants. We could also provide for personal nesting spaces and community spaces, prepare spaces for our future gallery, and use of a limited selection of carefully edited visual supports.

Meeting Spaces and Learning Centers

We continued. Furniture and physical space came first. We examined the existing physical organization and floor plan, which Wendy had carefully designed and successfully used to support her fundamental educational values and goals for the children during the previous two years (see appendix for floor plans).

...my goal was to create an environment that would ensure success for my students. My focus was to build a model that supported the whole child, recognizing the important links between emotional, physical, intellectual, and social factors on a child's development. From my research and experience, I knew that the design had to be flexible enough to incorporate the needs, interests, and capacities of twenty-four different children.
(Oellers 1997, Masters Thesis, p. 32).

Wendy's existing design provided for a central meeting space large enough to group all the children in a full circle, include a story chair (an old, blue cushioned, maplewood rocking chair big enough for two children to curl up upon together), and offer ample space for comfortable meetings, discussions, movement, dramatics, play, and presentations. Surrounding this meeting space were clusters of two diagonally edged juxtaposed tables where students could work in groups of four. These table configurations had replaced the traditional box like, individual student desks and could be easily moved and reconfigured as needed. Surrounding these table clusters were the learning centers that Wendy had designed and organized a visual/spatial center, a supplies center, a listening center, a library and a nature center.

Wendy had designed these classroom spaces and learning centers to support the flexibility needed to accommodate diverse learning experiences ranging from group meetings and collaborative learning, to individual learning and reflection; from quiet and calm to highly active, full movement activities. They further offered learning opportunities across the spectrum of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, language modalities, and individual learning needs. Her supplies reflected her experiential curriculum and her organization of the centers provided for student accessibility, thus promoting independence and responsibility of the children regarding the use and care of these supplies. Wendy had also thoughtfully included dramatic props and puppets as essential materials and supplies in her classroom.

Wendy's teacher space, the traditionally sacrosanct teacher's desk was a semicircle desk piled high with children's work, books, and personal things. This space was continually transformative—always the teacher's desk but shared with the children and used for small group reading, writing, and art-making. Under this desk was a very protective, more enclosed space for quiet work. Wendy's space reflected the shared space of the whole classroom.

Physical Studio Space for the Visual Arts

What more was needed with such a rich, flexible, and supportive physical environment already in place? Since I was highly concerned with the visual arts component of building community and arts integration, I proposed a far more fully supplied and developed visual arts center, which meant separating the existing visual-spatial center into two locations. At this time, the visual arts supplies were minimal in comparison with the abundance of playful construction and building media—media that needed a great deal of storage space and activity space. We moved this media to shelves bordering the meeting ground, deciding that the floor space of the meeting ground would provide a wonderful place for fantastic building and playing with these materials. We then set aside a bookcase near the sink for art supplies and designated the two long tables as art tables, placing them in the wet area by the sink. The bulletin board behind them would become part of the children's gallery. This was our initial art center.

This art center also became the children's favored place for quiet reading, writing, and the preparation of reading logs: both under and above. The art center expanded throughout the year as the children used the table clusters for additional space, reconfigured the table clusters as needed for various activities, used the floor, and found favorite art spaces (similar to favorite reading and writing spaces)

underneath our class tree, the easel, Wendy's desk, and in assorted quiet areas. We added large sheets of flat, heavy cardboard for drawing surfaces, which the children could bring to any area indoors, or outdoors as portable drawing boards. The initial art center became located throughout the entire space of the classroom.

Media and Materials: The Artist's Tools

As the year progressed, so, too, our need for additional shelving and two additional bookcases were added to the arts center. This need developed out of our explorations with media and materials, their organization, and our ongoing concern for student accessibility and responsibility. Materials needed to be easily accessed, distributed, and returned by individual students and by groups of students. Materials also needed to be ordered and collected. Since our budget was \$100.00 we made an inventory of existing supplies and decided to hold the ordering until we had done some temporary borrowing-returning of art supplies (from the art educator and myself) in order to determine what we would consider as our core needs. Our initial inventory included: a small amount of 8"x10" white computer paper, two gallons of elmers glue and ten small glue bottles, twenty scissors, scotch tape, individual boxes of new crayons, individual boxes of watercolor colored pencils, individual boxes of colored markers, 2B writing pencils, a small box of broken crayon bits, a washbin size box of inexpensive colored pencils, and a huge box of assorted markers. A supportive parent donated a box of assorted yarns and another donated a large supply of assorted 11"x18" colored construction papers.

As we explored media with the children, our criteria for core materials developed: student friendly in terms of cleanup, care, and independent use; flexible use across many different kinds of creative ideas; ease of storage; reasonability of cost yet of good quality; support of creativity; and inspirational responses from the students. We wanted materials that would offer multiple and diverse outcomes, have many different uses and applications, could be used for a wide range of purposes, have no "right way", and would offer an unlimited range of possibilities. We also wanted a core of supplies that would always be available in order to nurture the development of manipulative skills and proficiency with selected materials, tools, and media; the development of a confident visual vocabulary regarding the characteristics and manipulative possibilities of these materials; and the development of personal tastes and preferences in addition to

offering opportunities of invention and exploration and choice. The list, which we developed, is available in the appendix for review.

An additional factor of concern was Wendy's comfort, as, in her own words, a non-artist, with media and materials. She needed to feel confident as a co-explorer and co-user of these materials. We further knew that we had a very dynamic art educator and a very strong art education program. Wendy's role was not to become another art educator but to facilitate the use of the visual arts in her classroom on a daily basis as a valued form representation and language offering unique opportunities for meaning-making and learning sensitive to the diverse needs of her students.

We pondered over our concern for three-dimensional materials. Our Art center focused on two dimensional materials and manipulations. Should we add more sculptural materials? Were we limiting opportunities of expression the children needed? Our observations of the children gave us our answer. They invented all kinds of relief images as they combined media, including sculptural forms and kinetic images. The children also invented incredible sculptural constructions using the materials from the spatial center. We realized that these were sculptural and architectural inventions. The children created them during spatial play every day without needing neither any additional supplies nor any instruction. We simply needed to pay attention and give attention to their creations.

Practical Insights

Once we had our arts center located and supplied, introduced to the children, and being used, we gained valued insights and affirmations concerning basic organization relative to daily use and interaction. We discovered a constellation of organizational factors that facilitated the use of the arts center and also helped grow care and community.

We used an established set of core materials and media. The children's growing knowledge of the core materials and their manipulative possibilities through daily opportunities for choice and practice led to highly personal and independent choice-making regarding selections of media and processes. Wendy could engage the children in creative problem solving: posing multiple questions of how-to to the children and trust in their creative responding and inventing. This meant that she did not have to be a materials expert or technical expert. They really could construct knowledge and experience together. One of our favorite remembrances is the day Wendy explored painting to music with the children and Julie's remark to Wendy,

“See Mrs. Roche, you can paint, too!!!! You’re an artist, too! Just like us!” Independently selected media led to enhanced personalization and individuality of expression while concurrently developing personal repertoires of facility and sensitivity to materials.

The materials were accessible to the children. The children could independently and cooperatively access, distribute, and return materials as needed during different activities during the day. They could choose to use the language of visual art as personally needed, when chosen for intentional expressive-communicative purposes, and when participating in planned visual arts activities and collaborative activities. The children learned how to take care of these materials, to clean them properly and thoughtfully, and to store them with thoughtfulness and consideration—for the materials and for other users. We actively engaged in caring for our tools and supplies. Cleanup further entailed care for our whole environment—our whole classroom. The children were responsible for this care. Consistent organization and location were key elements of this accessibility and care. Each material had a specified place on the shelves and had a labeled container/s. When and if we changed locations or containers as we worked towards improvement, we learned to carefully explain these changes to the children and include our reasoning.

The caring for our tools and materials helped with our sharing of these tools and supplies with one another. Wendy and I had purposefully organized certain supplies to necessitate sharing during art activities. We observed that the children further shared new colors that they had mixed with one another, shared brushes, offered one another help and support, and helped take care of each other’s works of art. The sharing of all supplies in the art center generated another sense of community belonging—this was *our* arts center and these were *our* materials. Children no longer brought in special materials boxes with “my crayons, my markers, my materials.”

I observed this phenomenon acutely in January when a new little girl, Mariah, became part of our classroom. She brought with her a special, pink, lunch-box sized, plastic box filled with her very own supplies and materials. She was also quite unwilling to share these supplies with anyone else. The children were rather awed with this box at first—it was definitely special—but were simultaneously unenvious—we all had our community supplies—everything we needed and we shared everything. Mariah was soon a confident, cared for, and caring member of our community, she began sharing the contents of her box, and

there finally came the day when she arrived at school and her little pink box stayed home. “My” had been replaced by “our.”

Centers of Care within the Studio

I kept reflecting upon Nodding’s (1992) five Centers of Care. The concept of centers of care could provide us with a foundation. I recalled how theoretically inspirational the conceptualization of such centers had been to me, yet how ephemeral and intangible they seemed in terms of actual location. I began by considering these centers as both physical and metaphysical spiritual-emotional spaces rather than being only a concretized place. I asked myself how these centers could be manifested and utilized to facilitate the transformation of the classroom into the “studio space,” which would be the arena of our mutual becoming and for the emergence of the compassionate community?

Therefore, within each center of care (Care for Self, Care for Intimate Others, Care for Distant Others, Care for the Natural world, and Care for Ideas and Man-made things) multiple levels and multiple kinds of experience could be possible. The practical component was that of enablement of action and doing while simultaneously nurturing the possibilities of being-with rather than being-apart. Being-with meant cultivating empathetic inter- and intrapersonal relationships and preventing alienation, marginalization, and disconnection, which would mark being-apart. One could be alone and with, independent and with, be fully oneself and with, but not cut-off or uncared-for. The centers of care for self and care for others would be manifested throughout our classroom studio through the socio-emotional, inter/intrapersonal space of our interactions and developing relationships with one another. The visual arts would become a means of traversing and traveling, of engaging and attending, of reflecting and expressing, of empathizing and understanding: of developing these centers within inner selves and within the studio of our classroom.

Our centrally located meeting circle area certainly provided the physical space needed for collectively coming together as a whole group. Choices also abounded for the finding of quiet personal spaces as needed. The organized learning centers (library center, nature center, math center, spatial center, listening center, and the new visual arts center) supported individuality and offered a multiplicity of languages with which to create, to share, and to listen to one another’s voices and stories. We were able to listen to one another’ stories during our whole community meetings (which were a daily ritual), during small group

discussions, and through individual discussions between child and teacher and between the children themselves.

The Gallery

Our physical-metaphysical centers of care not only permeated our studio but also enveloped and surrounded our community as our classroom studio further transformed into our classroom-studio-gallery. The walls of our room celebrated and offered our visual stories to all beholders. Visual stories created by the children! As described earlier, our ceiling, too, became a tapestry woven from the children's images: mirrorland. Looking up, we gazed upon one another and ourselves. Outside our classroom, the corridor space, too, was filled with our stories: visual and written, becoming an extension of our classroom gallery inviting the larger community to behold and become engaged.

The children prepared their work for the gallery. They chose colored construction paper mats and helped one another glue image to mat. They named their works with their own titles and prepared title cards. They used the computer lab to word process selected stories and titles. The gallery was theirs. Parent volunteers helped to hang the work, take down work, and hang new work. The children's learning, their growth and development, their understandings, inspirations, voices, stories, and care surrounded us at all times. These displays generated many engaged dialogues, which in turn generated, empathy, understanding, curiosity, and confirmation. The gallery became an extended cultural portfolio exhibiting an ongoing collection of the children's visual stories, which narrated the experiences of their lives and their learning.

Narrative is an act of giving shape to experience so we can more fully know the moral, historical or popular significance nestled in its structures. "The coherence of the self." Writes Carol Witherall, "is grounded in the narrative structure. The narrative of a life is not random; rather, it is given coherence through notions of time, value, and purpose.

The gallery truly confirmed our valuing of the children's art and the diversity of their expressions. It became an ongoing source of critical feedback and a valued means of demonstrating learning and understanding, which was open and accessible to the whole school community.

(Witherall and Noddings 1991, p.93). narrative structures unfold in time; they are wrought with social values and they are executed with purpose—to instruct, to entertain, to warn, to offer a common link with others (Salvio 1994. p. 420).

The children also had personal visual art portfolios, which they made from folded in half 24"x48" colored tagboard and decorated. These individual portfolios provided a special place to hold and keep safe

artworks in progress and completed artworks—either waiting for display or being returned from display. The portfolios provided another message of care and manifested our valuing of the children's creative work in the visual arts.

We intended these portfolios as additional sources for dialogue and reflection between the children, teacher and children, and families and children. Although we did not utilize these portfolios as we planned in terms of biweekly formal sharing, I did engage the children in portfolio sharing during the month of January. At this time, the portfolios were bursting with artwork. I was amazed how the children could recall each artwork, when they made it, how they were feeling, and what they were thinking. Each child had a favorite piece. As I shared the portfolios, I started with a one on one conversation but soon had a gathering of four children all attending to the portfolio and adding their comments. These personal portfolios have the potential to be vital sources for reflection and dialogue. Personal and small group sharings can be more intimate than the public gallery. Both invite deeply personal conversations and understandings. We are sharing our lives with one another. These are the conversations that nurture care and empathy and self-awareness.

Boundary Crossing: Extending the Studio and Centers of Care

Parents and local citizens were also important members of our community and our centers of care reached out to them. Wendy was already a strong builder of extended community partnerships and relationships. Parents and local citizens had an open invitation of welcome to join the classroom any time as visitors, participants, helpers, inquirers, and as resources. Parents, family members (realizing the diverse configurations of family and parent), and local citizens offer an unending abundance of diverse experiences, skills, artistry, history, culture, and knowledge. Families abound with stories and storytellers, unacknowledged teachers and life long learners. Community was not limited to within the walls of the classroom or the corridors of the school, we reached out beyond, visiting and being visited. David's mother brought a portable kitchen into our classroom and taught us how to make pumpkin pies from scratch. Laura's mother came in almost every morning during our writing time. Kyle's mother often joined us during morning meetings. We visited two farms in the local community and had *many* other local field trips. We constantly went outdoors to explore. The boundaries between outside world and inside classroom were traversed. The community surrounding us provided, as London (1994) emphasizes, firsthand

encounters and opportunities of witnessing that inspired individual creative responses and inquiry. The studio accompanied us everywhere.

We also reached out to the world of nature. Care for the natural world was manifested within our studio by our Nature Center. The children could be with plants and animals taking care of them, studying them, engaging with them, and empathizing with them. There was a viviquarium with fish, frogs, and salamanders, a terrarium with two gnoili lizards, and a terrarium with five hermit crabs. During the fall the children hatched monarch butterflies and in the spring they hatched chicks. I brought in a tall ficus tree in late September and arranged it near the paper supply shelves. Stefan and Kyle moved the tree into our morning circle and there it remained throughout the year. Every morning the tree was hugged and greeted during our circle meeting. Under its branches offered a whimsical place to read with a friend, or draw, or write, or play. We observed a bird's nest nestled into its branches, placed there by Kyle and kept there all year long. The puppets would also be frequently perched upon its roots.

During the winter holidays, I brought my gift to the class: a pair of hamsters named Misha and Masha. These two soft, cuddly little creatures became the subjects of many inventions, written stories, drawings, and caring attention. The children took care of their cage, their food, their water, and the giving of affection and attention to them so they would, in their words, not be lonely or feel unloved. Wendy and I observed how the children would often bring one of the hamsters to one another as a source of comfort when they perceived a friend to be sad or upset (also a manifestation of their perceptual and caring sensitivity). Our hamsters were our friends and part of our family.

This was our indoor nature center, providing us with a glimpse of our larger nature center right outdoors. Thus our nature center flowed from indoors to outdoors as we traveled out side as much as possible exploring the wonders of the natural world surrounding us and awaiting our attention. Within a simple hand span of grass lies a world of enchantment, life, and encounter. The children became avid collectors bringing the outdoors indoors and out again as much as possible; through actual physical objects and other times through reflection, discussion, image-making and multilingual story. Visual art engagements provided us with an enhancing means of paying attention, sensitively observing, empathetically relating, and making meaning as the children created highly personal re-presentations of the natural world. Through visual art they could express their wonderment, fascination, feelings, and concerns.

Modeling and Practice: Encounter and Dialogue

Meeting Time Dialogue

Since we celebrated individuality, diversity, and multiplicity of possibilities through multiple forms of representation, and we shared our stories daily during our meetings, we participated in the valuing of each other's ideas. The children were invited and encouraged to express their feelings and ideas, to experiment, to answer questions uniquely, to ask questions, and to use each other as sources of inspiration: sharing ideas and possibilities with one another. "MY IDEA" was not a boundary to be protected from trespassing. Instead, "I have an idea" became the beginning of a rich chain of associations—to use the children's term, "piggybacking" of ideas.

Meeting time was established as a morning and afternoon ritual to begin and end the day, which offered daily community gatherings.

The scheduling of both morning and end of day meeting times have proven to be a vital factor in the development of our strong sense of community. In the morning, we gather together in a circle on the floor. It is a time to come back together as a community. It is a safe place commiserate, share, worry, and laugh. It sets the template for the day...It assists the transition from home to the community of learning in our classroom. In addition, the children who are experiencing difficulties at home need the assurance, stability, and support of a caring community (Oellers, 1997, pp.42-3).

This meeting circle also became the meeting ground for dialogue and discussion and was returned too many times throughout the day. As the year progressed and trust was established in terms of belonging and acceptance, and as multiple forms of expression were valued and shared, inner voices did emerge. Meeting time discussions included Maggy's worries for her mother in the hospital, David's missing of his friend who moved away, Kyle's new baby sister, Brian feeling lost and isolated because he was living in a strange house while his family was completing the construction of their new home, the death of Kerri's beloved dog, being angry, being scared and losing electricity during a storm, wondering what a soul is.... We shared our feelings of loss, loneliness, fear, and joy. The children offered each other advice, consolation, support, and as their empathy swept up over our circle within their shared their stories, discovered their shared humanity, their connections, and their care. The community meeting was our medicine circle. Many times, especially during the first few months of school, the children did not have the verbal vocabulary from which to articulate their ideas and feelings. Visual imaging provided the opportunity to "tell" and to

“speak” through pictorial forms of expression. Visual imaging also provided the embodied form for feelings and stories to be held within and translated later through words in either written or oral form.

My Participation

I entered the class community on Friday during the second week of September (as described in Chapter Three: Settings and Locations). Wendy introduced me to the children as an artist who told stories with pictures. I brought three different kinds of portfolios with me to share and to model different kinds of portfolios: my idea sketchbook, my process-learning portfolio, and my special presentation portfolio. I had carefully selected a variety of works, which represented very expressive and abstract styles, highly realistic, and detailed, very interpretive, exploratory learned from mistakes, ideas in progress, and of course, told stories. The children needed to meet me and I them. I also wanted to provide them with a model of an artist as a learner, an explorer, and a storyteller emphasizing how we are all artists. I also wanted to share diverse kinds of images in order to emphasize how many different ways there are to make art and express ourselves.

Following this day, I came three times a week. I arrived one half hour before school started, meeting with Wendy, and then staying through lunch and recess in order to have more reflective time with Wendy. Fridays I stayed the entire day and another hour at least, at the end of the day with Wendy. These reflective times gave us the opportunity to share our observations, questions, concerns, points of view, ideas, and insights. We both delighted in the opportunity of our own ongoing, consistent ritual of dialogue and sharing with one another. The extent of my time in the classroom and engaged involvement with the children, enabled me to become part of their compassionate community.

During the beginning three months, I did plan and teach specific art activities to the children, providing a model for Wendy and the opportunity for her to co-explore materials manipulations and creating with the children. Many of these activities were manipulative explorations designed to develop the children’s experience and knowledge of materials and their manipulative potentials and qualities. We also wanted to develop their sense of confidence as artists and awareness of one another as artists. An extenuating circumstance was the absence during this time, of the art educator at Gilford Elementary School. A new art educator had been hired but could not begin teaching until late in October. This meant that the children had a substitute teacher in their art classes. Our children stayed with us instead, and I

provided arts engagements with Wendy. I planned activities that were thematically and conceptually interwoven with Wendy's thematic units. I did not prepare elaborate "art projects" nor complex activities that would have intimidated Wendy. Furthermore, I never, never provided "How-to, follow my directions" activities. I always engaged the children dialogically and asked them how-to questions that built upon their growing knowledge of materials, media, and manipulation. We did want to appropriately challenge our children and provide a progression of art engagements with sequenced skill and knowledge building, opportunities for practice and personal enhancement, transfer, and elaboration in mind. The chart on the following page provides a timeline depicting the flow of art activities and learning in relation to the whole curriculum that emerged.

When I was not there, Wendy continued to offer the children choices of art-making and incorporated picturing during writing. She also began to independently design and implement art activities in support of the children's learning on a daily basis. One morning I arrived to a full display of watercolor and crayon resist paintings telling the children's' stories of quiet and accompanied by a profusion of "Quiet is" poems [see samples]. Another day I arrived and was overwhelmed to see large collaborative drawings (by pairs of children) telling me the story of their trip to the apple farm. I saw tractors, trees, apples, watering hoses, baskets and ladders, a cider press, and even a giant blackbird filling the entire picture drawn by Mark and David. As Wendy rapidly gained confidence not only in facilitating art-making but with her own exploring and creating, I became less and less the arts facilitator and more and more a co-participant, helper, and ideational collaborator.

Artists and Illustrators

I did introduce Wendy and the children to many adult artists, writers, and illustrators as sources for ideas and as means of validating the children's ideas. However, I carefully included artists and illustrators whose work did not inadvertently intimidate the children but inspired creative confidence and affirmed *their* ideas, feelings, and imagery while modeling a range of diverse artistic styles and uses of media [see appendix for listing]. Together, we focused on sharing the artist's stories with the children and used the processes of aesthetic scanning and engagement with the children as pathways to sensory immersion, interpretation, insight and inspiration. All stories were welcome in this polyphonous tapestry of

TIME LINE by Vascak and Oellers

Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
Kandinsky/ Line, shape & color to convey emotions O'Keefe Observation & Imagination Eric Carle Collage techniques	Artists Profile: Marc Chagall Van Gogh Story paintings Brush marks	Artists Profile: Matisse Patterns & portraits	Artists Profile: Paul Klee Mondrian Geometric patterns & shapes	It is of critical importance to allow children time to revisit the exploration of art materials. This helps to reinforce the confidence levels as well as inspire the possibilities.					
1. Exploration of art materials Crayon marks Collage Craypa Brush strokes Color mixing	Craypa & water color resist Colored pencil Mixed media	2. Opposites Texture Size Distance Shape Color	2. Self Families/ celebrations Similarities/ Differences	2. Animals/ Habitats	2. Animals In winter Winter birds	2. Animals Classification How are they same/different?	2. Birds Chickadees Observational drawings and writing	2. Insects symmetry patterns I am poems observation drawings	2. Weather Season: Spring Stories Poems
2. Self All about me "When are we artists?"	2. Opposites Texture Size Distance Shape Color	2. Self Families/ celebrations Similarities/ Differences	2. Animals/ Habitats	2. Animals In winter Winter birds	2. Animals In winter Winter birds	2. Animals Classification How are they same/different?	2. Birds Chickadees Observational drawings and writing	2. Insects symmetry patterns I am poems observation drawings	2. Weather Season: Spring Stories Poems
3. Weather: Windy day pictures	3. Weather Patterns/ Pictures Poems	3. Weather Seasons: Winter	3. Weather Snow and ice Poems/stories	3. Weather Storm stories	3. Weather Storm stories	3. Weather Wind poems/stories	3. Weather Rain poems/stories	3. Weather Season: Spring Stories Poems	3. Weather Season: Spring Stories Poems
4. Trees Observational sketching "Painting with cake tins"	4. Self Who am I? "Compare me I am....." Self portraits Families "Daddy" stories	4. Patterns "In the world around us"	4. Imagination What if..... Fiction/non- fiction	4. Imagination What if..... Fiction/non- fiction	4. Imagination What if..... Fiction/non- fiction	4. Imagination What if..... Fiction/non- fiction	4. Imagination What if..... Fiction/non- fiction	4. Imagination What if..... Fiction/non- fiction	4. Imagination What if..... Fiction/non- fiction
5. Patterns Butterflies/ symmetry	5. Senses Touch/texture Sight/picture painting words "Sound out I.e. Quiet is....."	5. Life masked "Imagination & Self"	5. Self How are we the same/ different? Self portraits Prejudice	5. Self How are we the same/ different? Self portraits Prejudice	5. Self How are we the same/ different? Self portraits Prejudice	5. Self How are we the same/ different? Self portraits Prejudice	5. Self How are we the same/ different? Self portraits Prejudice	5. Self How are we the same/ different? Self portraits Prejudice	5. Self How are we the same/ different? Self portraits Prejudice
6. Patterns Butterflies/ symmetry	6. Patterns Butterflies/ symmetry	6. Patterns Butterflies/ symmetry	6. Patterns Butterflies/ symmetry	6. Patterns Butterflies/ symmetry	6. Patterns Butterflies/ symmetry	6. Patterns Butterflies/ symmetry	6. Patterns Butterflies/ symmetry	6. Patterns Butterflies/ symmetry	6. Patterns Butterflies/ symmetry

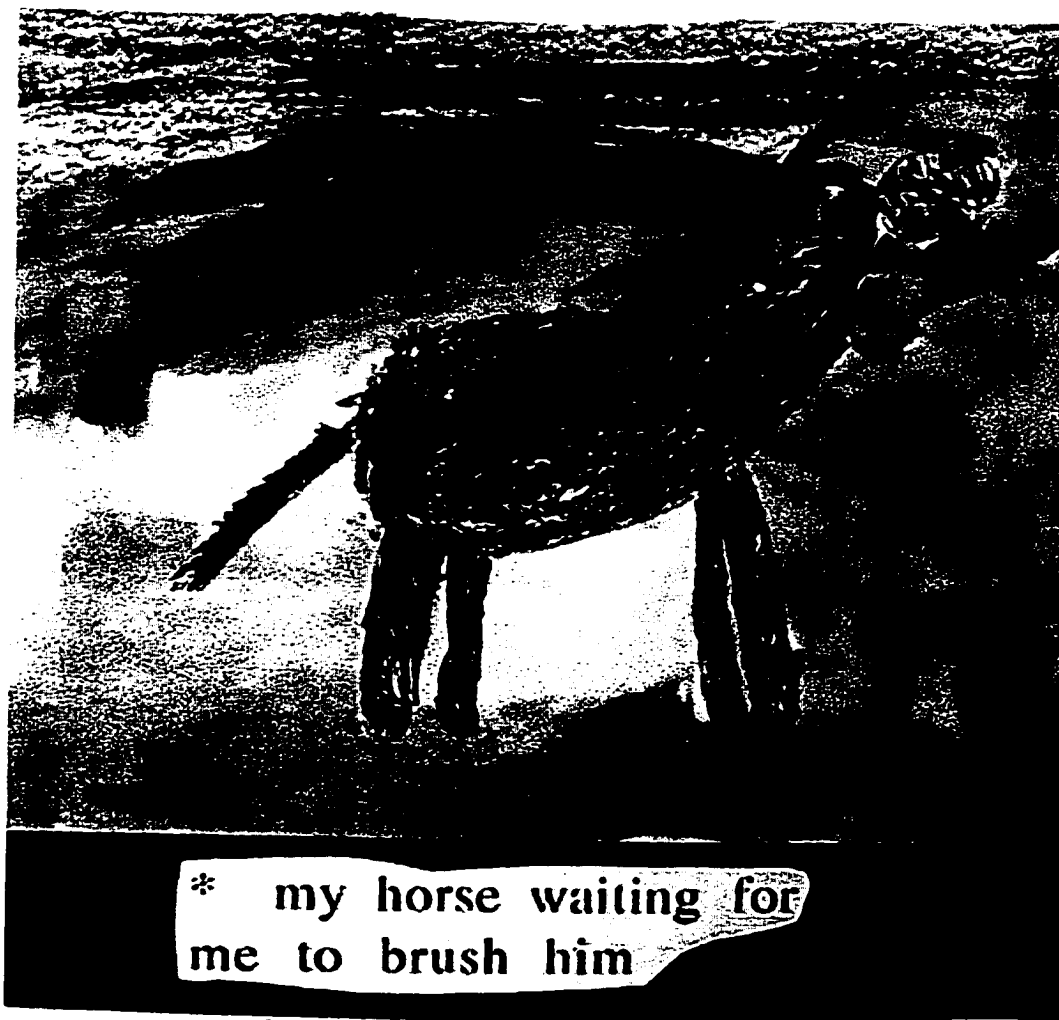
Classroom Community Building

Daily activities that reinforce sense of community

During art activities the sharing of ideas as well as art supplies helps to build a sense of trust and validation.

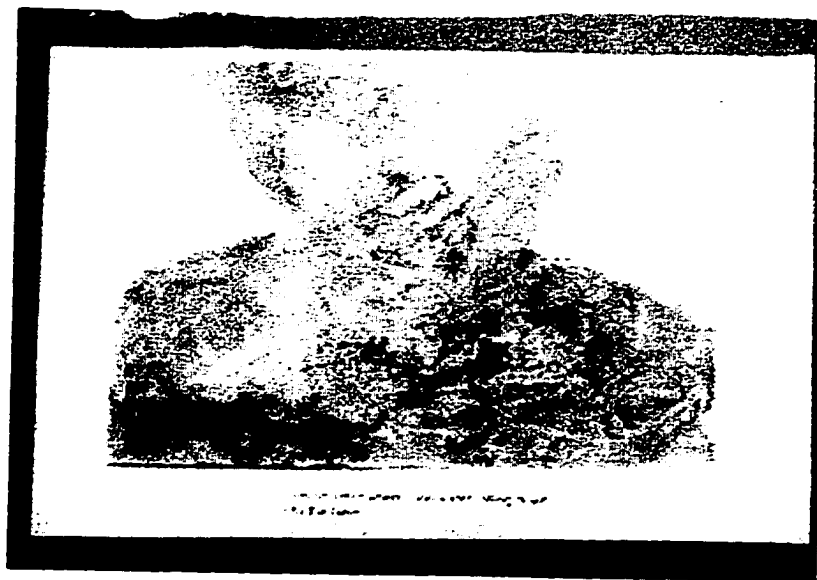


53. Quiet is leaves
falling by Laura -
November



* my horse waiting for
me to brush him

52. Quiet is my horse
waiting for me to brush
him by Mark - November



55. Quiet is water
falling into the lake
by Stefan - November

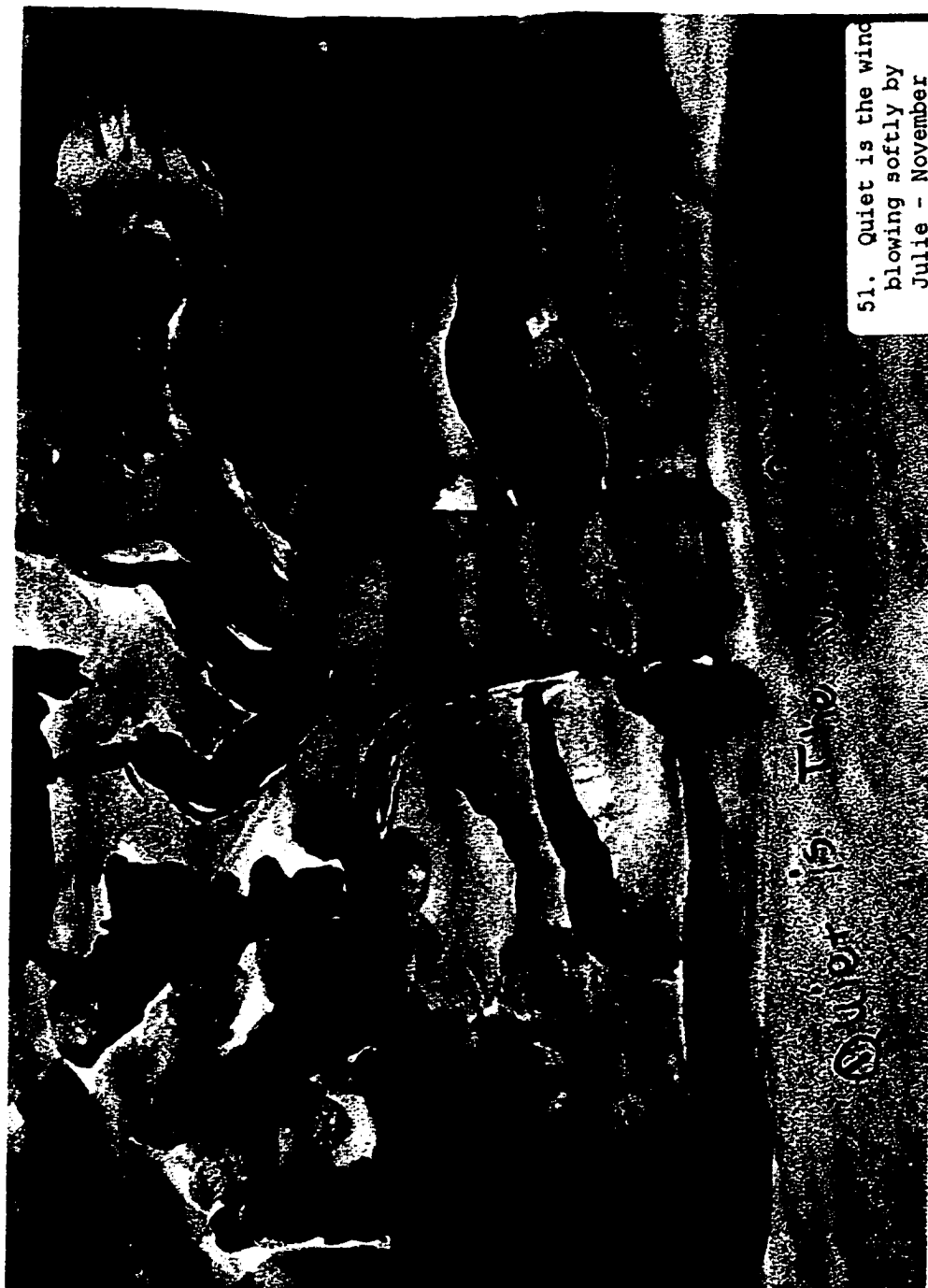


* clouds moving to the

54. Quiet is clouds
moving to the sun
(with her dog who had
just died) by Kerri -



50. Quiet is a spider
spinning by Maggy -
November



community and creativity being woven by all of us—inviting our inner selves out to play with care and love.

This practice led us to the consideration of the influence of illustrated texts shared and used in school—especially, for these children, storybooks and poetry books. Here was another area of subliminal influencing and subversion of values of diversity expression. Consider the difference between an Eric Carle illustration and Norman Rockwell! When the majority of all the illustrations fall into a highly skilled representational style, we inadvertently send the message that this is the kind of art we really value and that there is really only one kind of valued art. Instead, we sought to celebrate the children's personal art-making and to confirm our valuing of their diverse work and the diversity of all artists. The major artists I shared with the children are listed on the following page.

The Community Sketchbook

When I came to the class, I always brought my sketchbook and observation journal with me. I wanted to be able to make sketches of the children engaged in various activities as part of my field notes. The children were enchanted by this activity, so much so, that it was a source of distraction and I sketched less and less although I kept the habit of having my sketchbook with me. As the children became confident of themselves as artists and as they became familiar with daily art-making as part of their day, they soon wanted to draw in my sketchbook, too! Drawing in Mrs. V's sketchbook became a special activity and necessitated the taking of turns or of collaborating on a drawing.

One morning during our meeting, Mark was particularly distracted and asked if he could draw during the meeting time. I know that it is very possible use drawing as a means of focusing and even paying attention (Olson 1992), so I gave him my sketchbook. He drew quietly throughout the meeting yet also participated as a good listener. His drawing that morning was his first in a series of drawings telling the story of his wish for a horse [see sample]. The next day I came in, Julie asked if she could sketch during meeting. She sketched her friend Katlyn who was seated directly across from her and included detailed aspects of the room. She was sketching from observation—just like Mrs. V. [see sample]. Wendy and I discussed the children's interest and need to draw in my sketchbook—as a special place for drawing and sketching—and we decided to offer them their own special class sketchbook. I brought in a sketchbook approximately 9"x11" and this became their *community* sketchbook. This sketchbook was used during

LIST OF ARTISTS INTRODUCED TO THE CHILDREN

ERIC CARLE

MARC CHAGALL

VASSILY KANDINSKY

PAUL KLEE

HENRI MATISSE

PIET MONDRIAN

GEORGIA O'KEEFE

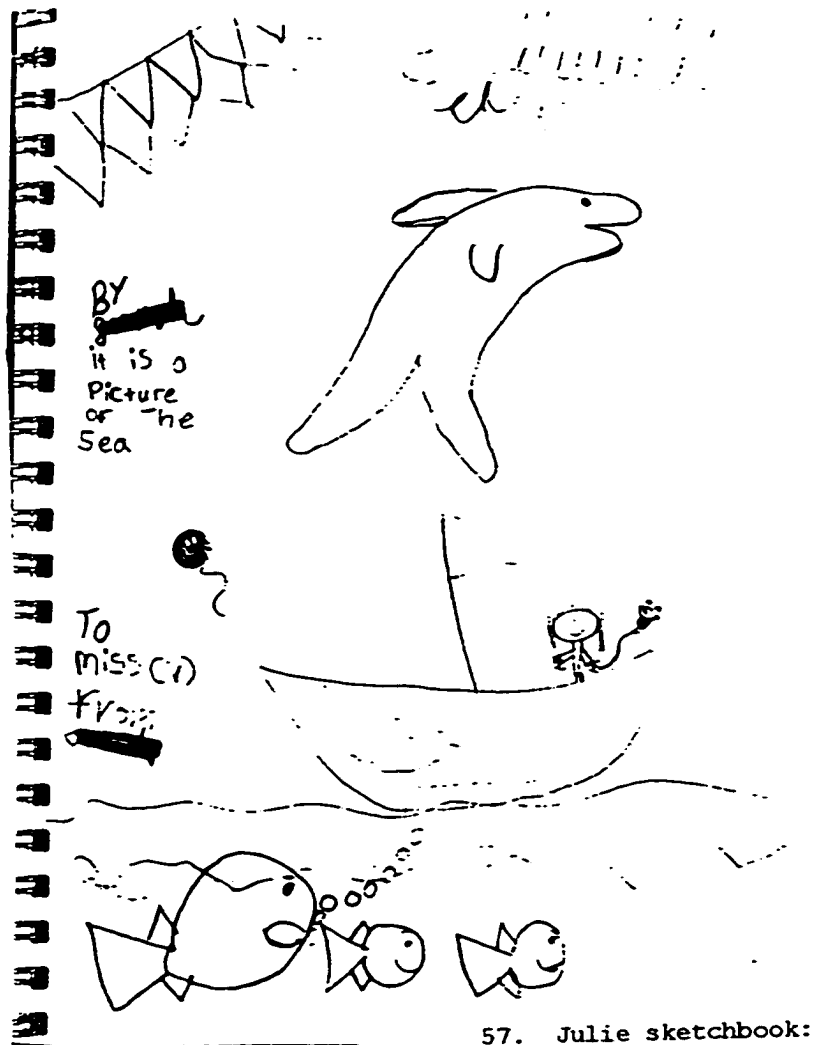
VINCENT VAN GOGH

CYNTHIA VASCAK

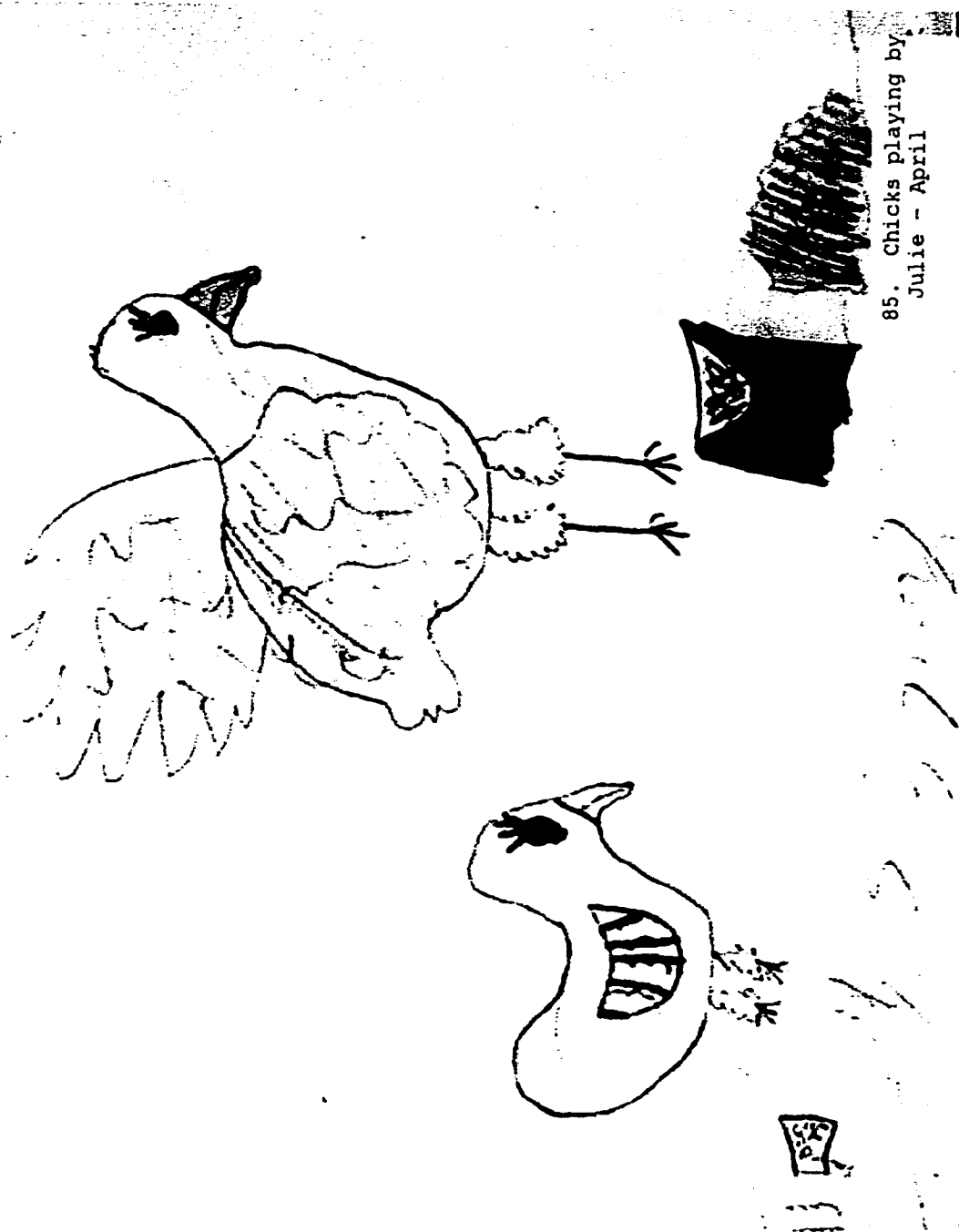
ALL THE CHILDREN



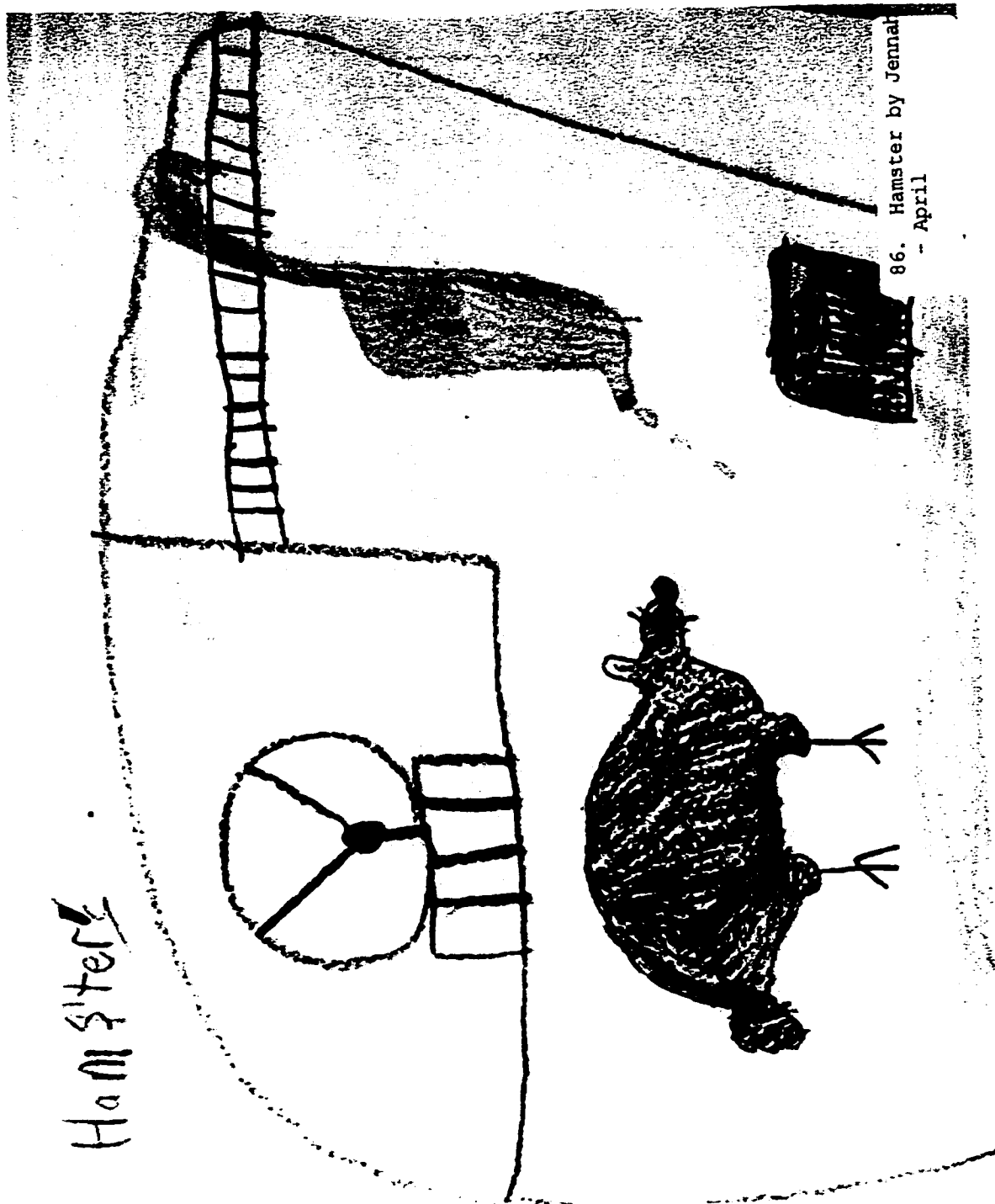
56. Julie sketchbook:
observational drawing
of our meeting circle
November



57. Julie sketchbook:
picture of the sea -
November



85. Chicks playing by
Julie - April



86. Hamster by Jenna
- April

choice times, during snack times, indoor recess, need times, and story reading time by individual children and collaborating pairs of children. Wendy and I continually remarked upon the care given to this sketchbook and the children's understanding of this as a collective community sketchbook belonging to all.

Encounters and Inspirational Dialogue

A critical concern I shared with Wendy was for creative arts activities to be creative arts activities and not imposed teacher activities with adult imposed aesthetics, narrow expectations, and secondhand experiences.

Artistic expression is born from personal experience. To the degree
That one's personal encounters with the world are engaging and
Vivid, one will discover material for engaging and vivid personal
Expression. Such experiences need not be heroic or even very dramatic
But they do need to be personally and carefully encountered. Secondhand
Accounts of someone else's deeds conveyed through sign and symbol
Offer diluted, generalized, and distorted rendition of nature's fullness.
The learner's personal experience—and the art produced from this
Vicarious contact—is also likely to be diluted, generalized, and distorted.
The arts, whether visual, literary, or performing, are richer in meaning when they are an
expression of experiences that matter deeply. Things and events that matter, that have the
potential to shape people's lives take place within the immediate environment or
community. The community is the place where friends are made and enemies are
grappled with. It is here that dreams and fantasies are generated and tested, where the
triumphs and the tearful losses of life are encountered. The community is the web of life
that inextricably embraces, defines, and empowers children and adults alike (London
1994, p. 4).

Wendy and I share a dialogic-experiential-encounter approach to teaching. We both strive towards providing our students with encounters and experiences of engagement that will stop the world for a moment and invite wonder, imagination, and possibility. We use these experiences as catalysts for developing dialogue and discussion, which become a means of furthering ideation, reflective responsiveness, perceptual awareness, and the sharing of our many responses and stories. When we do not provide a direct encounter, we draw upon the salient experiences and vivid stories of experience of the children's lived lives and try to make these saliently remembered experiences come alive again in our classroom via dramatization, sensory related questions, movement, and/or telling. Our goal is twofold: first to share community and to validate the children's experiences of their world (also their feelings and ideas and questions).

Secondly, we try to move from a sense of waiting for something to happen to inspiration. Inspiration then compels action and is the wellspring for creativity. We realized how, within the lexicon of

schools, we speak of motivation and of motivating students. We examined this term, “motivation,” using our Webster’s Collegiate dictionary: the definition focused on the encouragement to act and then added incentive and inducement. Such use of language implies a subtle sense of required attending to externally imposed “musts” and tasks. I went to “Inspiration.” Now I found high spirits, a sudden exciting thought, liveliness and vivacity of imagination, elation, the awakening of the creative impulse, arousement of the emotions, being ardent... “to inspire” meant to arouse, to awaken, to excite, provoke, stir the blood, to impart courage, resolution, confidence, ideation...(Webster 1947). If we were to seek the fusion of felt thought and the taking of the cotton wool out of our eyes, to seek creativity and artistry, we were seeking inspiration.

Wendy and I worked with a dialogic model I had been introduced to during my graduate studies with Dr. Judith Burton at Boston University I have encountered variations of this model throughout my research activities in the field of art education. These models have a common core of dialogic questioning that begins with experience/encounter, involves the senses, invites multiple perspectives and responses, challenges personal and collaborative problem-solving, and shares the goal of meaning-making. We used this model as our loom for developing inspirational multisensory dialogues with the children (see appendix for sample).

Viktor Lowenfeld, in his landmark book, *Creative and Mental Growth*, Lays down tenets for employing the creative process in art Education ...He observes that children’s self-expression is richest and most meaningful for them when the subject matter is most meaningful to them and they are free to express themselves in self-appropriated Ways. Lowenfeld constantly reminds art teachers to ask themselves ,What is of interest to *this* child, here and now? Imposing adult themes on a child and adult means of expression of a child’s mind is not simply ineffective, it is positively destructive of our whole ambition, which is not to make art, but through creative process to nurture creative and mental growth (London 1994, p. 30).

The “dialogue” is actually an experiential cycle of shared encounters and inspirations.

We begin with experience, encounter, engagement. Sometimes this is a story from one of our books, a poem, an illustration, a musical composition, a performance or a work of visual art selected with the intention of connecting with the children’s lived experiences and concerns, their new learning experiences, and personal stories (authors and artists may be adult or child). Sometimes this is an encounter such as a nature walk or observations of sunflowers under a magnifying glass, or the moving of our bodies like the

wind. Sometimes this is a question or reflective remark that provokes personal rememberings that we share. The key is personalized experience—firsthand experiences of the children based on children’s existing knowledge, issues of concern, and curiosity.

This encounter is embedded with and followed by the sharing and elaboration of our responses and our ideas. Elaboration may involve dramatization, movement, and multisensory perceptual observation. Verbal telling and sharing is accompanied by other language forms as needed. Listening and telling become more sensitive and articulate as we grow together in community and as we do practice dialogic sharing within this community.

We then use brainstorming approaches to problem finding and problem solving. Guided by open-ended questioning as much as possible, the children are challenged to draw upon their prior knowledge, their creativity, and critical skills to hypothesize solutions and generate multiple possibilities of action. At times, choosing and editing ideas occurs, especially with collaborative activities, just as new ideas may be generated during process. Regarding art activities, brainstorming revolves around the choices and uses of media, materials, and processes; expanding from the children’s manipulative repertoire and ongoing sense of inquiry and invention. Is there any one way to make a soft, fuzzy, floating line? How could we show....? What about some other ways? Our goal is for the children to generate their own ideas and consider many different possibilities of translation and interpretation depending upon their expressive needs and their ideas.

Inspiration is followed by creating and making—discovering and inventing. Here dialogue is encountered between children as they work and between teacher and student. Critical praise, encouragement, extended questioning, shared responses, and affirmations can occur. As we, the teachers, model dialogic and caring feedback, so the children use dialogue with one another. Instead of offering superficial praise, we give our attention to each child’s work in progress and respond to their concerns. “Tell me about your picture?” can initiate a conversation and the sharing of the story within. Descriptive observations of the child’s image can offer reflective insights and affirmations for the child. “Look how you mixed those dark colors and used them to make the sky feel stormy. What gave you that idea? How did you mix them?”

The description of the parts and their translation into paint helps to validate the child’s effort and intention and frequently prompts

The child to think of others to add, on this occasion or in the next painting. At times a tactful question while a child is working will inspire the child to make a more complete picture. For example, “where is your car going? Is it on a road?” or “Are you going to put yourself in your picture?” Or “What else is near the school building?” Most of these questions encourage the child to make representations of people, to develop richer imagery, to unify the composition. A sparse or ineffectual painting is the sign of a child with few ideas or an insecure child. This child can often be helped by a few well-chosen questions, but children should not be directed to add specific parts. When all the children are having difficulty, it is usually the fault of the original discussion. Either the theme was not very meaningful to the children or the discussion was not successful in helping the children get in touch with their thoughts and feelings... (Smith 1983, p.68).

Again, our intention is to facilitate the ongoing generation of ideas, responses, and choices in the formation of highly personal and meaning-laden images—not imposing our aesthetic values or intentions upon the children. Our message is that we value their ideas and inventions and that we value their many different interpretations and expressions. So, too, they engage in discussion and sharing with each other during the creative process, feeling free to ask one another, “How did you do that?”; offer advice, “You can bend it this way and then cut it like this...”; question, “Are you gonna put your mom in your picture?” or “What’s your idea?”; tell, “This is our new truck and when my mom and I were driving we got into an accident and the...”; or give praise to one another, “Wow! That’s really awesome!”

After making, sharing. We wanted to be able to find time for sharing circles after every arts activity. Time for the children to give attention to each other’s art works, tell their stories, and share their discoveries. Time to celebrate their different ideas and help them to become increasingly aware and sensitive to one another’s understandings. This sharing and observing also affirmed the multiplicity of possibilities for translating experience into visual form. As we did so, we also found that concepts and themes within the larger unit were addressed and woven into our discussion. Mark tells us that his butterfly is sipping nectar from the sunflower with his proboscis, Kyle explains how he experimented to create his soft texture because he wanted to make the tree bark feel like the rough bark we felt on the pine tree outdoors, Maggy tells us that the wind in her picture is lonely and missing its mother (we all have families of some kind), and Eric invents a map bug with a top and a bottom conveyed by using both sides of his picture—he wants his bug to show us how to get places the same way we use maps to go on vacations and see the places where the butterflies migrate to... Kerri shares that her picture shows how she has learned to tie her sneakers all by herself and how she has decorated them with pattern designs...

Since we could not always organize the time needed to meet for such sharing, we worried whether the children were receiving enough feedback, attention, and opportunities for sharing their work with us and one another. Again, observing the children gave us our answer. We observed how, during creating and making, the children did give attention to one another and used their freedom to move across the room to see one another's work and to talk to one another about their works. Wendy also, floated through the children as they worked stopping to give attention, to ask questions, and to engage in individual or small group discussions. Even when we did not have time for full closure sharings, images were matted by the children and displayed on our walls—if we were working with wet media, images were placed on the floor and on tables for drying. During such periods of time, the children would regard each others work and talk with one another—showing and sharing their creative expressions, discoveries, and identities. They were active creators and beholders.

The attention to reflective beholding and the attending of one another's work is a form of listening to each other's stories with care. As we do so, we reflect upon experience, gain fresh perspectives, share dialogue, and gain insight. We were building understandings, finding connections, developing empathy, gaining self-confidence and self-awareness, and weaving our compassionate community. As we pose questions to the children, we follow up as needed with interchanges and ideas, which help them to explore their memories and imaginations for more significant ideas and experiences. We add and share information, probe for explications and examples, ask for more possibilities and different ideas. Sensory oriented questions help us to develop vivid pictures in our minds and help conjure up memories and personal associations. Looks like, feels like, sounds like, smells like, tastes like, and reminds me of are invitingly multisensory and multimodal questions that lead into depth of perceptual involvement and engagement. Our dialogue begins a cycle of meaning-making, of storytelling, and creating. Our dialogue becomes a way of being in the world and of being with one another as creative individuals, storymakers, and storytellers. Our dialogue shapes our meeting ground inspiring our learning and our caring.

Telling our own stories is a way to impose form upon our often-chaotic experiences (Grumet 1988) and, in the process, to develop our voice. Listening to our own stories is a way for us to nourish, encourage, and sustain ourselves (Howe 1984), to enter into a caring relationship with all the parts of our self (Noddings 1984) (Cooper, "Telling Our Own Stories," Eds. Witherall and Noddings 1991, p. 97).

Pagano (1991) describes how through fiction we annex to the otherness of others and cultivate imaginative sympathy, through this sharing and beholding of each others images we find our lives in the lives of others. “We find a place from which to start a conversation with the world” (Pagano 1991, “Moral Fictions”, Eds. Witherall and Noddings 1991, p. 202). These are the conversations and dialogues that build community. These were the dialogues that wove Wendy’s thematic issues, concepts, and skills together while inviting the children’s ideation, feelings, sensations, imaginings, and stories. The use of dialogic encounter offers the children the opportunity of sharing multiple perspectives, viewpoints, and ideas. Using visual art as a form of dialogue and story enhances these opportunities. Any one experience will be experienced differently by each individual. If we truly seek polyphony and multivoicedness, we need to offer the opportunity of inclusion through multiple forms of language and we need to value all our children’s emerging stories.

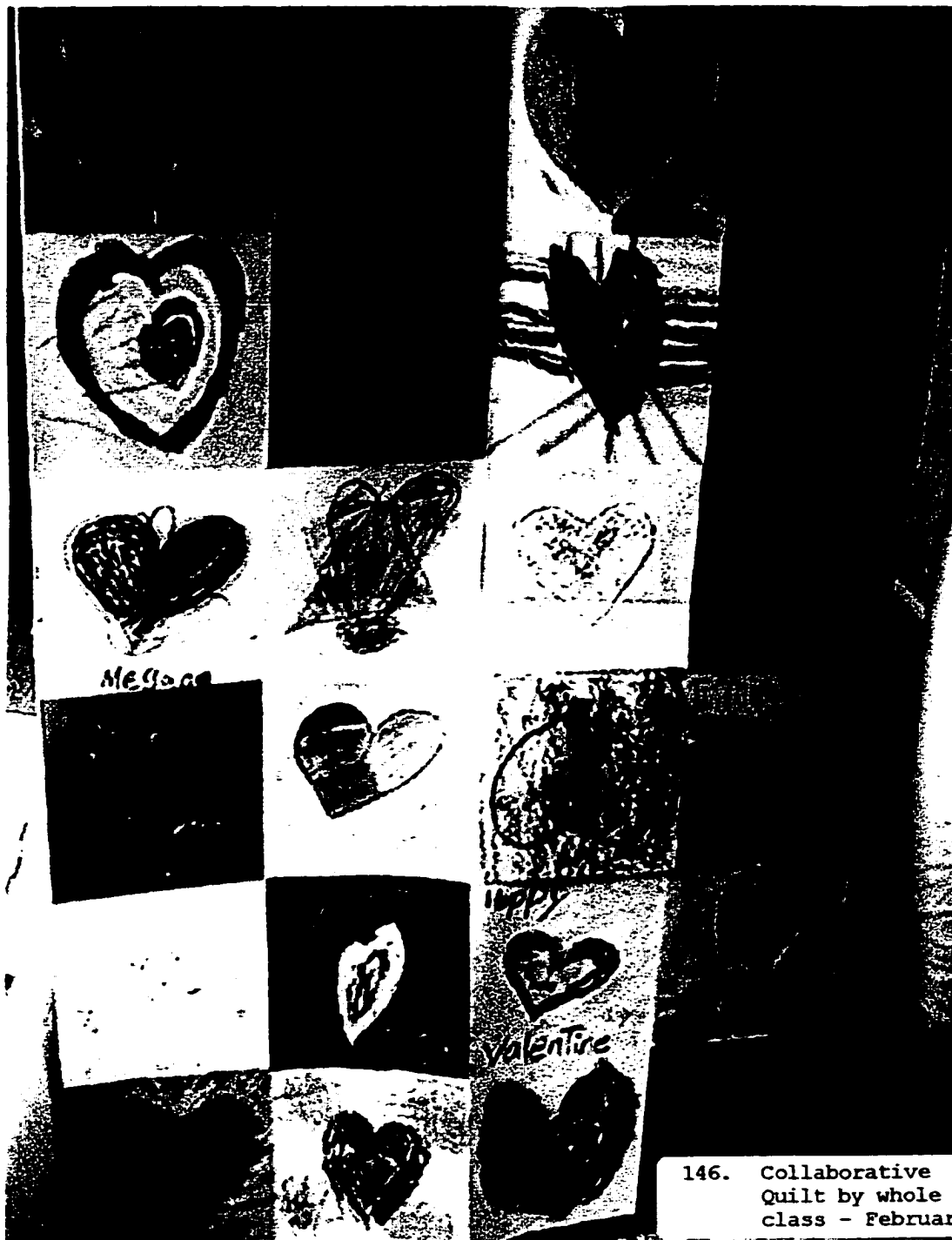
Dialogue is a crucial form of social interaction and of personal reflection. Through dialogue we invite a multiplicity of ideas, questions, experiences, and imaginings from our children. We empower their collaborative and individual knowledge building, offering the opportunity to consider and compare ideas, and to share mutual feedback. We value them as co-constructors of culture and knowledge. We model the valuing of the child’s experience and the respecting and caring for divergent and diverse ideas. Thus we continue to develop care and respect for one another and our diversity of interests, capabilities, and experiences. We become co-explorers as we learn from and with one another just as we also learn to value our selves. But it is within the caring, compassionate community that this depth of dialogue is engaged without fear of humiliation, being wrong, being different, or being alone.

Story: Different Kinds of Love

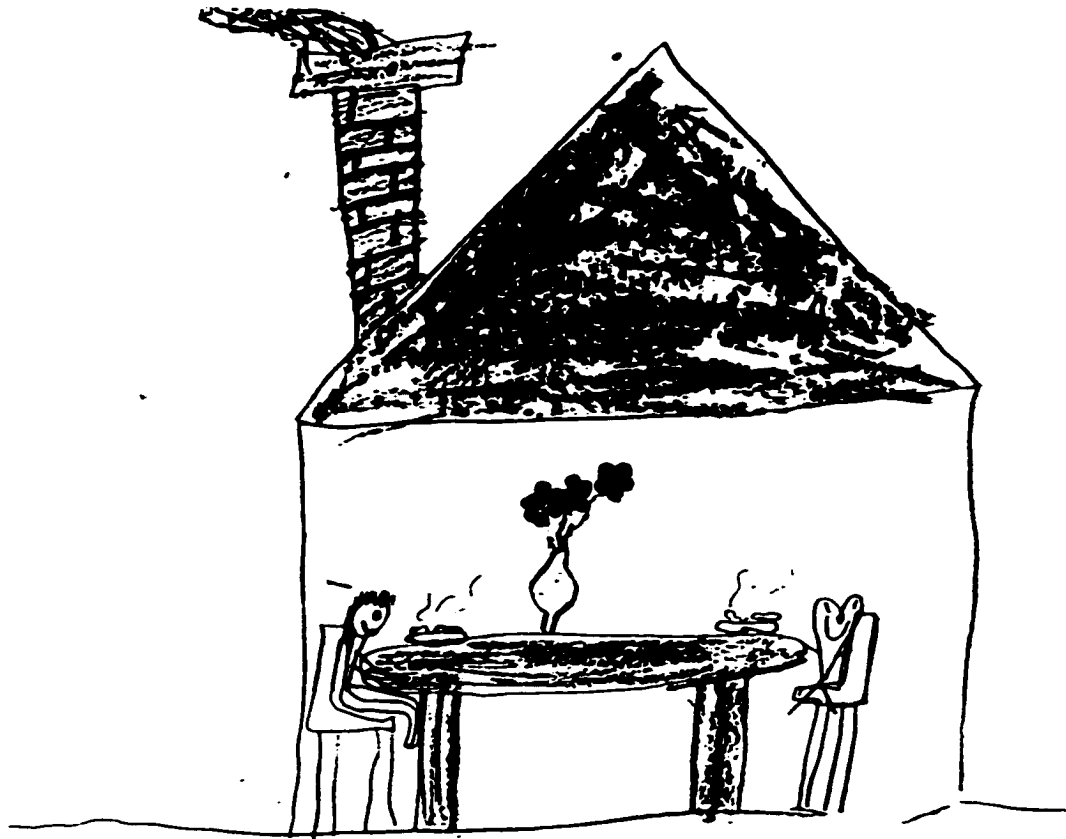
On Valentine’s Day we had provided time for an art activity since I was coming in for a special visit. The entire school was adorned with bright red or pink, perfectly shaped hearts. Oh Oh. Such an all pervasive stereotypic monologue! What will I ever be able to do with the children and still support their celebration of Valentine’s Day and their desire to make heart symbols? Wendy and I conferred. We decided to engage the children in a discussion of the emotion of love and what it meant to love someone, consider different kinds of love, and how could we show different kinds of love in our class. Maybe we could create some kind of friendship quilt? We began with a discussion (our dialogue) in our meeting circle. Questions

were generated. Everybody uses the word love. How do you feel when someone says I love you? What happens to our body? Are there other ways to tell or to show someone that you love him or her? How about I really like you? Is this different? How does this make our body feel? Let's try and show this with our bodies...Dramatic improvisation ensued...Are there different kinds of love? What might they be? As we explore different kinds of love—friends, moms, siblings, pets, flowers, favorite food, favorite sports, and back again to people, Jesse offers that sometimes you can love someone but be very angry with them and we pursue this idea, too...I then ask them to take out their imaginations using our special dramatic ritual for taking out our imaginations from our pockets, stretching it way out, and blowing into it until it becomes a giant ball in front of us...Imagine that this ball was full of our love, what colors could it be, how would it feel to touch...? Goodness! They tell me that love can be orange or blue or black or green or peach or violet or red or turquoise...soft or fluffy or scratchy or really big or tiny or sparkly... We have worked with friendship quilts before so we draw upon our prior knowledge of quilt-making and brainstorm how we could do this today...the children suggest craypas and making rectangles that will fit together...they could fill the rectangles with colors and textures like love...they could use hearts, too, in all different colors and textures and sizes...I throw out the question is there any one way to draw a heart? Could hearts be fat or skinny or long or....they continue with their ideas...and David adds “but we don’t have to draw a heart...” They create their pieces of the quilt and together, decide upon the arrangement—laying their images on the floor and finding the combinations they desire. So many possibilities and decisions. It really looks different depending upon the arrangement. As they arrange and compose, they also discuss their images and ideas about love with one another. Wendy and I observe that this is not only a friendship quilt but has also become a story quilt.

This encounter exemplifies the development of our compassionate community and the transformation of our classroom into artists’ collaborative studio permeated with care and engagement. The children were able to discuss different kinds of love, attributes of love as manifested in their bodies, and how it felt to be loved and liked. They did so with attentive listening, perceptual sensitivity, and empathetic understandings. No one viewpoint became dominant. There was no competition for a dominant viewpoint. The children were able to consider and respect each other’s viewpoint as manifested in the final quilt [see sample]. Each child created their own highly personal image expressing their understandings and feelings



146. Collaborative
Quilt by whole
class - February



147. Valentine
by Julie - Feb.

Hi Valentine, You're
mine to take
out and dine in
a fine restaurant.

147. Valentine by
Julie - February

and they collaborated together to join their ideas into a multivoiced, polyphonous quilt. This quilt, I believe, represents the compassionate community, which these children and their teacher wove together throughout the year. The quilt-making process exemplifies the weaving of empathy, self-awareness, multivoiced and multilingual dialogue, and engagement while mirroring the weaving process.

Making Time in the Real World of School

Due to Wendy's approach to curriculum design and her understanding of conceptual bridging across and between disciplines, we were able to easily work together planning for art engagements that addressed the themes, skills, and concepts within her units. Art engagements were planned as specific activities (i.e. expressive paintings of emotions, observational and interpretive drawings of sunflowers, explorations of color mixing, or our nature mural...), and personal choice activities. We also wove visual art into language arts and writing as a core component of the writing process. Writing seemed a natural area to begin integrated weaving since image-making is so well documented as playing a critical role in the writing process of learners and of established writers (Dyson, Calkins, Hubbard, McClure, Harste, Woodward, and Burke, Graves, Murray, and Olson). Reading and writing, at Gilford Elementary School, are considered two of the most important requirements for essential knowledge in our primary classrooms. Wendy has observed that the more opportunities her children have for writing, the better readers they become. She asked, how could I incorporate the outcome of writing so that it will be collaborative, experiential, problem-based, and supportive of MI theory? I added, how can we infuse writing with multiple forms of representation that will mutually support and enhance one another while offering each learner the opportunity to share their stories and understandings as deeply as possible? *How can we move from teaching literacy to literacies?*

We did not want art-making to play subsidiary role here; considered as less valued than writing. We strove to develop the understanding of art as a valued language and as a means of reflecting upon and communicating experiences, ideas, and feelings—of telling our stories. We found that due to Wendy's planning with interdisciplinary themes and conceptual transfer, our art activities wove themselves into the whole emerging curriculum, just as art-making offered choices for developing understandings and demonstrating these understandings.

Wendy traditionally set aside a large block of morning time for writing—ideally planned to follow the morning meeting and a dialogic multisensory discussion developing ideas, recalling sensory perceptions and feelings, and brainstorming wordbanks for writing. Thirty minutes was the minimum time reserved for daily writing in personal writing journals at the beginning of the year. This time was expanded to forty-five to sixty minutes as the children grow and develop as writers. Wendy and I followed this established pattern as a guide for our planning: discursive, multisensory dialogue for inspiration; morning time as close to following meeting as possible, and the use of journals. We added an emphasis on picture-making as a valued means of telling our stories, as a means of helping us develop ideas for writing, and as an essential part of the writing process. Picturing was a choice in terms of use and in terms of when: before writing, during writing, or following writing. Medias were chosen by the children. Due to the weaving of picturing, we knew we would need to allow more time for both processes and to not rush the children through either process. We began with a sixty minute block of time, which flexibly breathed in and out as needed but eventually became more of a ninety minute period of time.

Thus we planned for a minimum daily involvement with the visual arts during this writing time. As discussed, Wendy used a fluid form of time flow. Since Wendy's in-class time schedule was flexible (this did not include for the time externally scheduled for school specials: library, computer lab, physical education, music, and art—and lunch and recess and math/science enrichment (which Wendy relinquished in order to give more time for the other first-grade teachers since she did have me coming into her classroom regularly), she could bring arts activities in at any time and sculpt her time as needed. Instead of working with standardized blocks of rigidly scheduled time, we reconfigured our organization of time into waves of flow. Time became a current rather than a series of boxes.

Since the arts activities always included inspirational dialogue (and art forms were valued forms for communicating knowledge and understandings) the themes and concepts of her units would naturally be woven into these activities and *most often* become part of the children's visual expressions. The children were able to transfer and apply knowledge concepts across disciplines or areas of study. (I emphasize most often because children do need to be enabled to create their expressions from their inspirations and this will mean divergence and the unexpected). One of my favorite quotes from the children came from Julie as we were observing and describing a painting of a woman wearing an embroidered blouse by Matisse as part of

our portrait explorations. Julie pointed to the painting and exclaimed, “Look! She’s wearing math on her blouse!” The blouse had intricate embroidery patterns depicted and we had just been studying patterns in math and inventing patterns with pattern blocks. Her self-portrait on that day included her observations and fascination with the intricate patterns in the tresses of her hair.

The Children: A Collection of Sketches

I can not tell this story without including the children. For ultimately, the children were our compassionate community and were co-weavers and artists. Who were these children? What kind of “class” arrived at the beginning of September? During the fall of 1997, there were 15 children in our class and in the other first-grade classrooms. This was an unusually low number of children as class sizes usually range from twenty to twenty-five at Gilford. There were seven boys and eight girls.

Some of these children were turning seven, others had just turned six, and Maggy would not be six until October. Four children were from divorced families, one of whom had already experienced three male father figures, and one who had been with his biological father all summer only to have him completely leave and disappear from his life. Another child came from a highly abusive family. Many of these children came to school with a high level of stress and anxiety accompanied by very low self-confidence. Two of the boys were struggling with aggressive-violent behaviors as they manifested their fears of being unloved and hurt. The majority of the children did come from middle class to upper middle class homes with two working parents while other families were struggling with financial concerns. Expectedly, the children had a range of diverse abilities and learning needs. Four of the children received supplemental support for reading and were “pulled-out” of class for their time with the reading specialist. One boy would eventually (by mid-spring) begin taking medication for hyperactivity and another began medication for attention and concentration during his second-grade year. We would lose two of our children to moves away from Gilford and we would gain a new member in January. Wendy described the children to me as especially young for a group of first graders. She explained that this meant especially self-centered and needy in terms of attention and community.

I will attempt to share some individuals, presenting a series of sketches that attempt to describe at least a glimpse of their personalities, characters, and growth. These sketches are incomplete and remain in progress just as the children’s lives are in progress and any attempt to catch a sense of their lives in a few

paragraphs is like trying to catch the wind and describe its many multifaceted and elusive characteristics in one breath. Yet this is what teachers try to do. The children described here provide only a small glimpse into the abundance of personas in our classroom. Time and space do not permit me to share all of them. My intention is that in meeting these few, they can enter into your meeting ground for a small spell of time, coming more alive and touching upon your memories and experiences with children.

Julie

Long blonde hair, blue eyes, pink petticoats and sparkle nailpolish swoosh into the classroom as Julie arrives with a burst of dramatic grace. She makes an entrance whenever she arrives, full of classical femininity and seeming fragility. She is small with a delicate bone structure. She began the year being quite outgoing in terms of seeking attention for herself, comfortably verbal and aware of her potential to charm. She was immediately confident with making pictures and has developed incredible image-making skills and a passion for drawing—especially drawing from observation. She also loved performing with movement and costume. Although she is a natural at making an entrance and drawing attention, she also would often select a quiet place for personal drawing and sketching. Her mother was divorced and she has had three different father figures. She has one older sister in college—studying art in Boston, she tells me proudly. In community, especially at meeting, Julie could hurt the feelings of others using negative and pejorative comments and criticism. She could be highly moody and easily burst into tears of anger and frustration at her mother or others and verbally lash out. We worried over her hurtful behaviors and how to develop her empathy and sensitivity to others. Her first drawings, as previously discussed, frequently depicted her fantasy home with detailed scenes of family happiness: swing sets, pets, flower gardens, apple trees, frilly curtains, and even a birthday party. As her passion for drawing continued to develop, and as we all explored art-making and sharing our stories with one another, Julie found that she could express and share her dreams, her sorrows, her fascinations, and her stories through her pictures. And we all listened. So, too, did Julie begin to listen to the stories and feelings of others. Within the larger constellation of our many opportunities to develop and experience care, we watched her transform, like a chameleon shedding old skin, into one of our most kindhearted, thoughtful, caring, and confident children. When Maggy ran full tilt into the doorway as we were leaving for lunch and exploded into painful sobs, it was Julie who embraced her, offered her solace, went to get her a cold wet towel, asked Katlyn to stay with her, and then

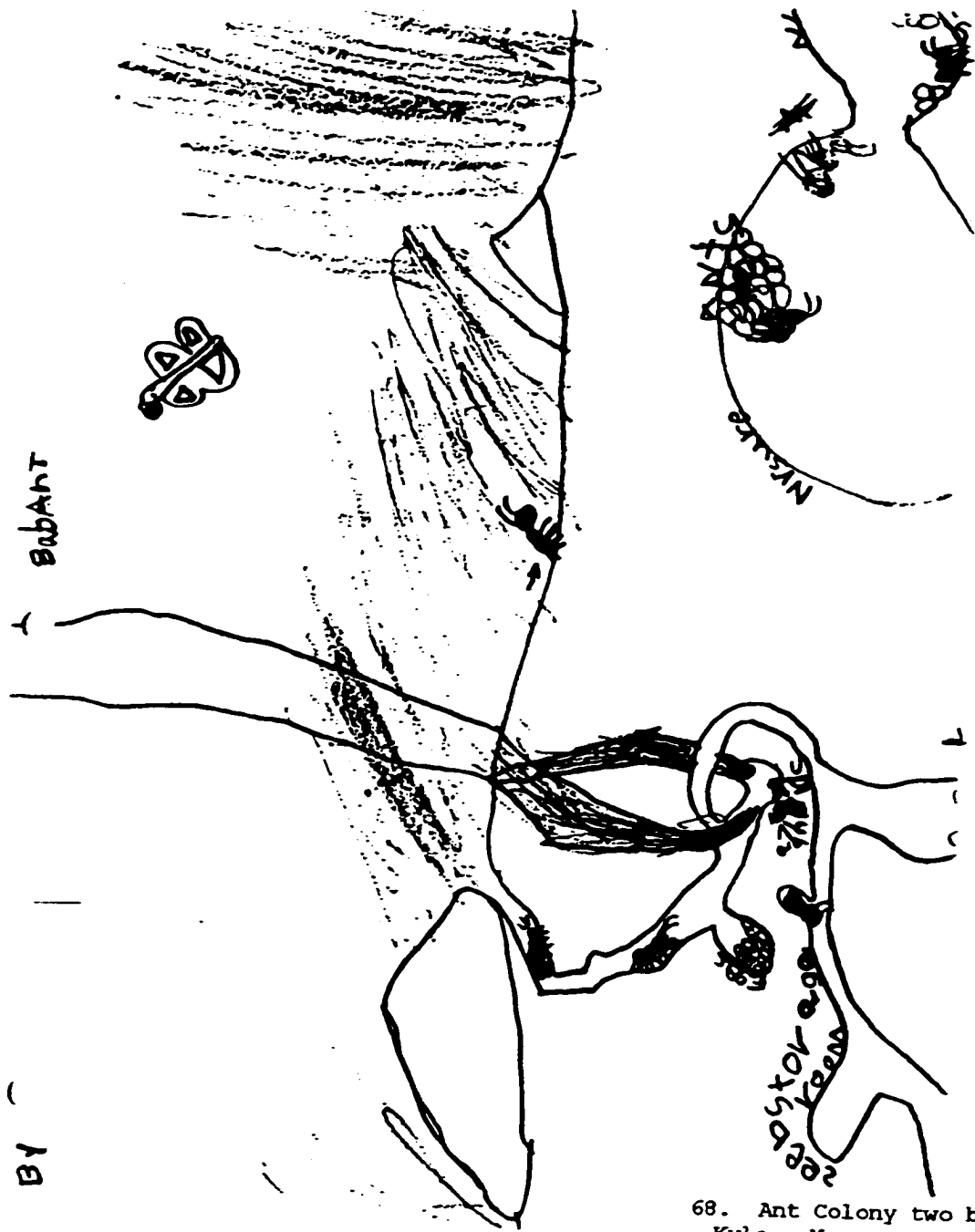
offered to walk her to the nurse. "I'll take care of her Mrs.V." I watched as the three of them went hand in hand to the nurse with Julie holding the compress to Maggy's forehead.

"Rain feels like acorns falling from the sky.
Rain feels like the sky is falling down on me." Julie

Kyle

Kyle was our tallest boy, spattered with freckles, would tumble into class and meeting circle, gathering his body together in a wave of awkwardness. He had great difficulty coordinating his movements fluidly, was highly distractible, disorganized, quiet and shy, and very slow to express himself verbally. His speech displayed awkward and inarticulate pronunciations with words almost whispered and blended together yet conveying a great deal of enthusiasm and emotional emphasis. He had poor balance and great difficulty with fine motor coordination. Holding a pencil was a challenging and physically painful task. He grasped it tightly with his whole fist, laid his upper body on the table, circled his arm around to the top of the page of paper with his hand hooked like the letter C. He then began to laboriously try to make letters and control the pencil marks—getting them to match the alphabet configurations was so very hard. Much easier to invent his own alphabet, he shared with me! He also invented his own spatial grid to help him control the sizes and placement of his letters.

Kyle was also extremely warm, friendly, thoughtful, and caring. He was extremely sensitive to the moods, feelings, and needs of others—from the very beginning of school he displayed acts of care and kindness: helping to find chairs, moving tables, sharing tools, offering to share snack, bringing a more comfortable rug to sit on, being a helper, and giving sincere compliments with a smile. The hamsters, Misha and Masha, were very special to Kyle. He would observe that Masha looked lonely and needed to play, that they needed more water or food, that they seemed tired, or that one of the children seemed sad today and perhaps he could bring Misha over to help. Kyle was often pulled out of class for testing and for reading support. He always returned to us quietly and with a smile slid slowly into circle meetings trying to find a place without disrupting anyone. Kyle loved drawing and painting! Painting provided a freedom of motion and joy of movement. He could flow with the paintbrush while inventing colors and textures. Drawing became a special language for Kyle—a language for telling elaborately detailed stories—the stories he could not write down, for simply writing three sentences could take a whole hour of painstaking



68. Ant Colony two by
Kyle - May

effort—and by that time the story was gone. He could capture his stories in his pictures and then take the time needed to slowly write the words that followed. His drawings tended to be small scenes with many details drawn on 8”x10” paper using pencil. His preference was a 2B writing pencil for detailed story drawings and craypas for larger color drawings. He could erase the pencil more easily. As with writing, he gripped his pencil tightly and lay himself around his paper. He would draw and redraw, wanting everything just the way he pictured it and felt it in his mind. He would often ask me for help, and I would engage him with questions trying to understand just what he did picture in his mind and exploring the ways he might achieve his idea. These ideas were often unusual viewpoints such as that of a bird standing front view with wings spread out or an aerial view of a crab scuttling across the sand. He preferred to be able to lie down on his stomach for drawing. When drawing, he could sustain his attention for an hour with ease—once he began. Kyle was also celebrated as one of our most enthusiastic problem-solvers. He was always inventing new ways to approach problems and even solve math brainteasers—full of ideas and suggestions.

His images were often filled with scenes of animals being in danger, death, being rescued, and dying. “I am riding my bike into the water and the shark killed the squirrel who fell in and he will eat me, too!” In my journal I have remarked how needy he can be in terms of attention and physical proximity. His father is a veteran and a hunter and his adored uncle had just moved far away. His seventeen-year-old sister lived with them as an unwed mother and Kyle became a new uncle himself. His favorite picture from his portfolio as he told to me and to his mother was his Beans’n Greens painting that told about his impressions of one of the class’s field trips. He told his mom, “I really love art. My favorite is painting faces but I really love to draw animals.” His mother wrote to us, “I love to see Kyle so focused on his artwork.” Visual art-making provided Kyle with a new language with which he could eloquently articulate his feelings, ideas, concerns, stories, and understandings. As the year progressed, detailed observational drawings, such as his anthill drawing (see sample) become a favored means for Kyle to demonstrate and share his conceptual understandings. Kyle could easily have become marginalized due to his challenges with speech, coordination, and language arts. However, in a classroom community that valued care, diverse forms of expression, and diversity of capabilities, Kyle contributed, believed in his capabilities, and belonged.

“Rain is a unicorn
Gallop in the air
It lands of a tree
And makes the leaves get wet.” Kyle

Michael

Michael was a sensitive, reserved, quiet, and shy little boy with big blue eyes and a shock of thick, curling sandy hair. He was one of our chronologically younger six-year-olds with a summer birthday. He has one older brother and a step Dad. His mother holds a degree in education and works at Gilford Elementary School. She is an actively involved-with-school parent and was a frequent visitor in our class. Michael reads and writes with great passion and ease. He also solves mathematical brainteasers with ease. He is an apt learner always seeking more information and asking questions. He was quiet and “well behaved.” At the beginning of the year, he already drew with elaborate schema, even incorporating ellipses, diagonals, and converging lines to show depth and dimension. Yet he was painfully shy. During meetings he was unable neither to look other children in the eye as they greeted one another nor to voice his greetings. He often looked away, hiding his face, and tentatively extended his hand. When speaking in group discussion, his voice would barely be audible. He loved reading, writing, science, math, art-making, and constructing complex architectural structures. During these collaborative constructions, Michael would often become the lead designer explaining ideas to his partners as their structure grew. Michael was one of the few children who, after the first month, would often begin journal writing with writing. He wanted the words to come first. He would then stop, begin a picture, return to writing, and travel back and forth between image-making and writing. His images were often of elaborate machines, buildings, and structures—even computers with an inside world—but not many people other than himself. His mother described him as being shy yet friendly, outstandingly successful with academics, very sensitive, and very focused. He loves math, writing, reading, and art-making. “The things that seem especially important to him are his art projects like murals and his journal writing.” Michael came to us as a confident learner. This initial confidence slowly began to include his social interactions and new friendships. Through his writing and his art, he gave voice to his stories and as he shared them, began to use his physical voice, engage in eye contact, and to use his mother’s words, “come out of his shyness shell.”

“Rain is like a white tail deer
Trotting through the woods.
Rain feels like a bucket of water,
With small holes in it.
Rain can be a bird,
Flapping its wings
Diagonally in the woods.” Michael

Maggy

Maggy raced into the room, a whirlwind of emotions and energy demanding immediate attention. “I am here!!!!” Her very presence announced as she wrapped her arms around Wendy or myself. She may have been wearing purple shoes and a star speckled cape or black suede lace-up boots and pink jeans under a striped dress with invisible wings and a blue ribbon. Maggy was a sensitive, caring, fanciful little girl full of wonder, self, and curiosity. She was chronologically the youngest member of our community and in her own family she was “the baby”. Her parents and her kindergarten teachers were not quite sure she was ready for first grade and placed her with Wendy. She was almost the littlest child in our class, had short blonde hair cut for ease of care, and wore personally invented clothing concoctions—a costume a day. She arrived full of enthusiasm and warmth, literally hugging all in her path. She loved sitting in laps. She flowed through the day on a current of stories and imaginings, empathy, and love. It was Maggy who drew herself into every picture and who could become almost anyone or anything in an instant. She could be as attentive and sensitive to the feelings of others as to her own. She it was who cried when we discussed prejudice and dramatized grouping ourselves into the brown eyed and the blue eyed group. The brown-eyed group could not go over to the window side of the room no matter how much they wanted. Maggy, with her blue eyes, started to cry, believing our drama was real, and wanted to go and be with the brown-eyed children so they would know she loved them! As time went by, Maggy decided that she did not need to know how to read, or write for that matter, beyond names, simple statements, and her own poems. She found her own invented stories far more fulfilling and fascinating—told orally and through pictures. She drew with intense concentration and abundance and told fantastic stories that developed in a stream of consciousness fashion as she leaped from association to association. As she would begin orally telling her stories, her whole body would become transformed—almost lifted out of itself as she became her thoughts and feelings: her head would lift up with her eyes nearly closed and her arms swaying... Even when interpreting stories from picture books, her own memories would take over and a new tale emerge—the pictures catalyzed her personal life stories. She embodied kindness and care for others—loving herself and everyone else. Maggy knew, so she told me, that the sunshine was God’s love raining down upon the earth for the flowers and for all the people to grow and be happy. She loved listening to stories, telling stories, making art, doing experiments, acting, and performing. She also loved being with everyone and receiving

their special attention. She did not particularly like trying to read longer stories, write more than a few sentences, or to work with numbers. I think her ideas were so fluid and sensorily-emotionally based that she did not have time to process them through words nor could words adequately express her ideas except as oral sketches and descriptions. When she did take the time to use written words, especially when titling her images, she expressed herself in metaphor. "This is the wind lifting the air, I am a sad cat (picture of herself being sad), quiet is the leaves swirling, my blue tree dancing..." Her images were carefully and lovingly crafted with full attention and engagement. She would often generate two or three images, all carefully developed, when other children would only have the time for one. Images seemed to emanate easily from her fingertips. She began the year drawing with specific and differentiated schema and soon developed detailed and elaborated schema intertwined with observational interpretations and spatiality

Her creativity and artistry blossomed while her "academic" skill development went into hold. The other children kept moving, swirling around her like a river current. She called for their attention and they gave it to her as she became more and more the little sister in our community who needed extra care and attention. Wendy was profoundly distressed, especially so as the spring progressed and we were confronted with second-grade planning. Would Maggy be ready for second grade? Would she be capable or would she get left further and further behind? Traditional values and expectations for grade level changes clouded our discussions. I believed that our care community permeated with the arts as expressive modes and valued languages would enable her continued growth. Growth is not always chronological or sequential but can come unevenly as cloudbursts and rainstorms, and can be multilayered and multifaceted. Growing moves in different directions at different times, meaning unevenness. If she stayed with the looping class, she would remain with her friends and the community who could also help her grow as peer teachers. What would happen to her if she stayed with us? What would happen if she was left behind and retained in first grade? Would that be the best way to help Maggy grow and flourish? Ultimately, the decision was made to retain Maggy. Her parents told her of the decision quite early, eliminating the possibility of changing the decision. Maggy became downcast, emotionally distraught, and worried. Wendy explained to her that she was like a special tree seed who needed extra time to grow. This analogy seemed to please Maggy and her cheerfulness returned—yet now accompanied by a newly sprouting weed: I'm going to stay in first grade because I need more time to grow so I'll just stop growing for a while...It broke our hearts to know that

Maggy would remain in first grade. I believe that in her own way, she flourished tremendously during her year with Wendy. Perhaps her standard skills had not developed at the standardly expected rate, did not conform to standard expectations, but her creativity, her voice as a storyteller, her sense of herself as an artist, an inquirer and an individual, her capabilities of empathy and care did develop. She was certainly, in Wendy's words, "a different drummer." I believed that she desperately needed to stay with the class and that she would continue flourishing in her own manner, eventually filling up the "gaps" as needed and when needed. I have been able to meet with Maggy and see her during her second year in first grade. Perhaps what struck me most was seeing desks in rows and only tiny glimpses of children's art tentatively peeking through structured projects. Maggy seemed somehow subdued to me—conformalized if that is possible. I sincerely wish for her Magginess to come out again and grow!

"If rain was Mom
She would be kissing me
On the water lakes." Maggy

Laura

Laura was sensitive, quiet, reserved, stubborn, independent-minded, and careful—wanting to do everything the right way. She was definitely not a risk taker. She entered first grade as a confident reader and writer and her capabilities developed rapidly. She had a very supportive family and a mom highly involved with school—even substitute teaching and assisting. Laura was extremely competitive within herself, a perfectionist, and soon had the longest reading log in the class. She took great care with all her work making it as neat and orderly as possible. She was wary of others, a bit standoffish, and she watched. When writing, Wendy described her as needing an extra challenge or "upping the ante" for Laura to move beyond safe, minimum expectations, to more risky elaborations. Her art-making began with safe symbols of rainbows, hearts, and flowers. As we entered into our explorations of media and mark-making, Laura began to open up to the delights of discovery and the sheer sensory pleasure of the manipulations. Since all work was celebrated and given attention and value, no one kind of art-making held precedence. Laura's art could actually be any way she wanted it to be! She could paint purple sunflowers and invent her very own symbols to tell her very own stories. Our apple printing activity was a turning point. She began with precision printing of a linear pattern being ultra careful to print with crisp edges. She watched as some of the children became far more fascinated with the possibilities of mixing paints on the apples and printing

invented colors in as many layers as possible. Laura decided to paint three colors on her apple and printed. "A rainbow print!" cried Katlyn in awe. They both began printing as many different kinds of multicolored prints as possible and soon the edges of the prints blurred and began layering and dissolving into one another—like a painting. Perhaps you could paint with the apple, too? Laura immersed herself in apple painting and her whole body moved and danced as she painted. This newfound freedom soon manifested itself in further risk-taking during her writing—pushing limits more rather than being safe—exploring possibilities of descriptive language, elaborating upon her ideas, and developing highly detailed illustrations. Her confidence soared, as did her sense of challenge and inspiration. Lindsay's mother wrote, at the end of the year that Laura had found her kindergarten year dull and boring. Her stubbornness often accompanied being bored. First grade this year was different. "Laura enjoys school. She likes being part of the group but she enjoys her independence. I believe Laura has gained a great deal of confidence in her abilities over the school year and is proud of her work. ...she seems to be more confident in taking risks with her writing...when Laura talks about school, besides snack, lunch, and recess the most important thing to her would be her reading...Laura relates back much of her school day to me. She finds artwork, working on art projects and preparing for school plays the most fun and fascinating. Reading and math seem to come easily to her. However, the writing process is more of a challenge." Laura no longer watches and waits she generates independent ideas and participates. She takes risks, she is playful and inventive, makes friends easily, and still works with care—care accompanied by inspiration rather than worry. She wrote, "I am an artist when I draw the pictures that I see in my head."

"Rain sprinkles
rain splashes,
rain zooms!
Rain is like a roller coaster,
When it twirls through the sky." Laura

Stefan

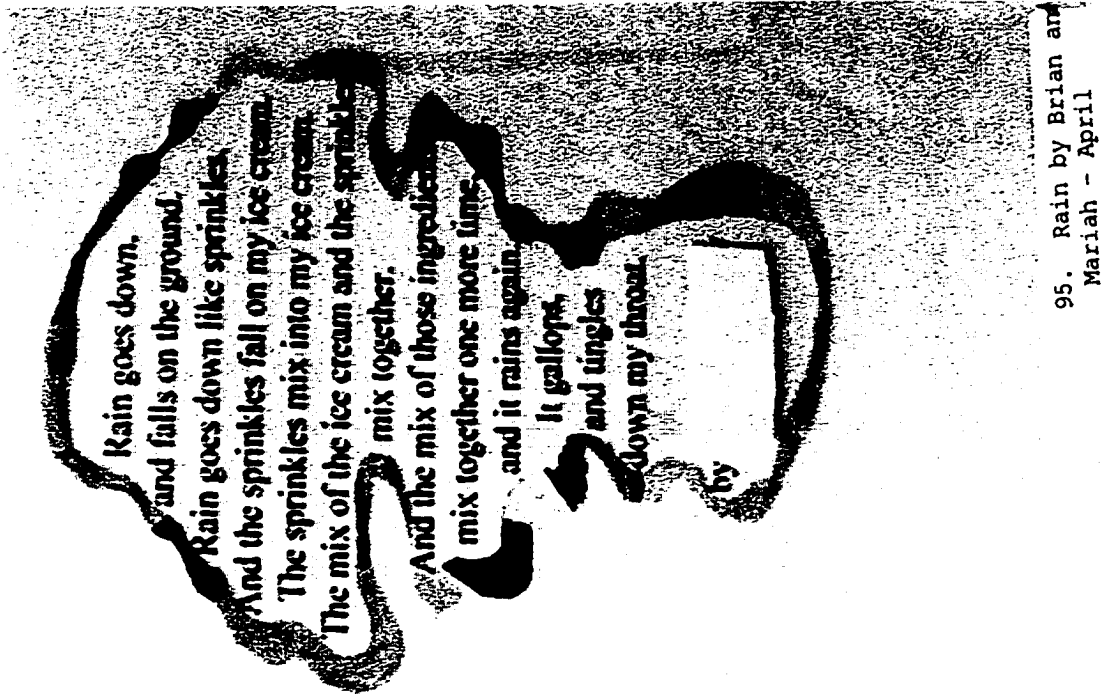
Stefan began the year with a burst of energy. He would storm into the room with a radiant smile and a loud greeting that announced his arrival to all. He was our chronologically oldest child, being seven already in September. As we pursued our learning as readers and writers, school became more and more difficult for Stefan. Wendy described him as undergoing a personality change as academics became more difficult for him. He became more and more reserved during our circle meetings yet easily distracted. By

early October, I described him in my journal as being extremely shy and absolutely quiet. Although his elven eyes would still sparkle with laughter and excitement—especially during art activities—they could also glaze over with distance. During morning meeting, he had difficulty participating, difficulty looking into the eyes of others, making body contact, and paying attention. These difficulties lasted long into the year. I recall being overwhelmed the first time Stefan truly looked into my eyes and smiled—well into November. It took a long time for him to trust any of us. His parents were divorced, he lived with his older brother and his mom, and he never knew where he would be on weekends or exactly when he would be with his Dad. Mondays and Fridays were high anxiety days when he withdrew into himself ever more quiet and distractible. He did love building, constructing, and manipulating art medias. During the making of our nature walk mural, he and Jeff had joined together making the rainy weather panel and the two of them explored rain and paint manipulations with the fullest of sensory engagement and discovery. “Look! Look! Mrs. V. Mrs.V. It’s really raining in our painting!!!” he exclaimed excitedly to me as he splattered watery paint drops from his paintbrush onto the painting. He needed a great deal of sensory exploration and manipulation. His artwork throughout the fall and into the winter maintained this highly manipulative and exploratory quality as he named his pictures, evolved stories from them, and kept creating. He particularly loved collages and creating designs that moved and had sculptural parts with texture and relief. His writing was laborious as his attention wandered. During writing, he manifested difficulty with fine motor coordination and remembering letter configurations. Reading was a great challenge as was math. Yet he listened and looked with avid attention during art-making, sharing, and storyreading. Whenever possible he sketched designs and named manipulations and built imaginary machines. He surprised us completely the day he drew “the universe” and both orally and visually shared his knowledge of planets, the galaxy, and telescopes with us. His images seemed to be the catalyst for his voice. I was further amazed at the seemingly sudden leap from manipulative drawing to a highly complex combination of observation and memory drawing. All his images from that point on were either highly intricate designs or very detailed observation-memory images with elaborately specific details and proportional relationships. This was also the turning point in his reading and his writing.

Raindrops in Puddles

Rain is wet.
It makes your hands wrinkly
and it is soggy.
It drops in the puddles.
It makes lots of puddles.
It drops on your skin like sparks.
It makes grass spongy.

by



Rain is like a white tail deer,
 trotting through the woods,
 Rain feels like a bucket of water,
 with small holes in it.
 Rain can be a bird,
 flapping it's wings
 diagonally in the woods.



60. Rain by Michael April

Rain is like a white tail deer,
 trotting through the woods,
 Rain feels like a bucket of water,
 with small holes in it.
 Rain can be a bird,
 flapping its wings
 diagonally in the woods.

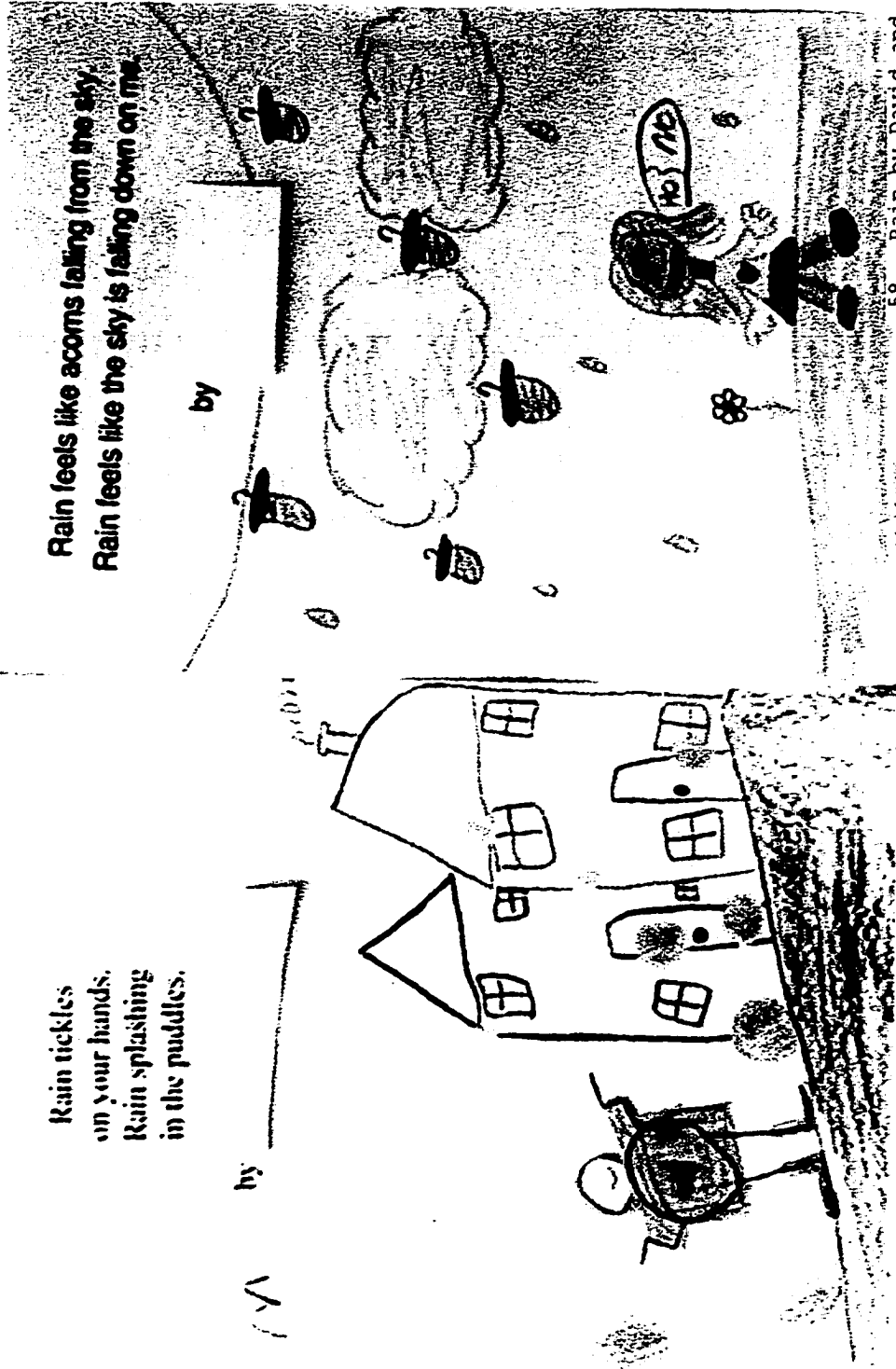


Rain tickles
on your hands.
Rain splashing
in the puddles.

by

Rain feels like acorns falling from the sky.
Rain feels like the sky is falling down on me.

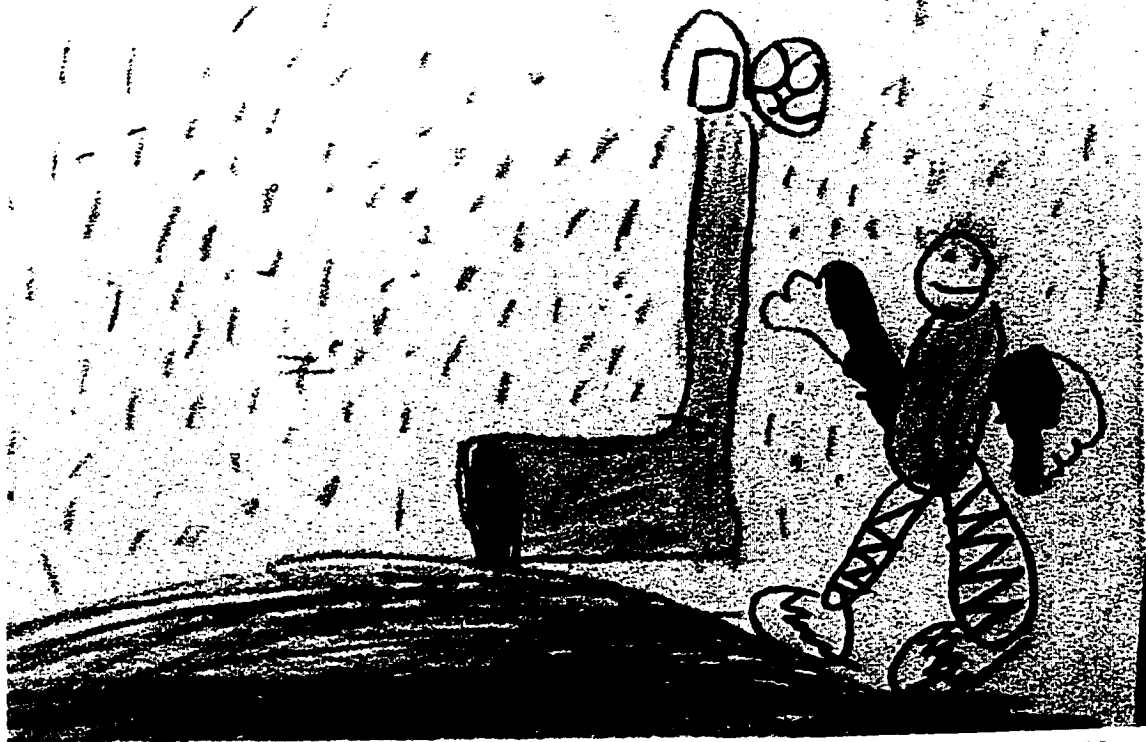
by



58. Rain by David and
Julie - April

I love to play in the rain.
Sometimes I'm lonely.
I go outside in the rain,
and I play basketball.
Now that my friend Derek moved,
I don't have anybody to play with.

by



92. Rain by Jeff
March

“Rain tickles on me.
It makes puddles,
Water puddles
On the ground.” Stefan

Stefan came to school one day soon after and showed me a special book—his sketchbook! He told me that he was an artist and wanted to draw things everyday and proceeded to share with me his new design with great pride and confidence. Drawing became his means of telling stories first to himself and then to others. He developed elaborate personal storyboards all in one image and could identify all the parts of his story and tell it with vivid detail to any listener. Then he began the writing process. He became known in the class as a great mechanical problem-solver and cool artist. During our end of the year portfolio sharing and interviewing, he and Jeff discovered a broken metal balance scale. The two of them spent a whole hour together trying to figure out how they might fix it. They soon had an abundance of possible tools on the table: rulers, elastics, paper clips, scissors, a pounding block, and a popsicle stick. They turned the scale upside-down, examined it, poked it, discovered a broken balancing mechanism and did the best they could to repair this broken part with some kind of replacement. The two of them told me of their task in rapid-fire speech—Stefan looking me directly in the eyes and speaking out with confidence and exhilaration. Stefan really taught us about the integrated nature of the learning process! Now in second grade, he has been coded Learning Disabled yet he knows he is a marvelous writer, mechanical engineer, and artist. He loves creating.

Returning to I and Thou

These children are the kinds of learners in all our classrooms. Some have rich prior experiences and learning attitudes nurtured sensitively at home. Other children come to us with complex and challenging personal histories and relationships with their world that have hurtfully impacted their learning and their sense of self. All of these children can grow tremendously in many different kinds of ways—most importantly, I believe, in the way of care. Each of these children has a wondrously unique inner self—waiting, even if in hiding or surrounded by thorny defensive walls, for care and love. Waiting for nurturance. Waiting, perhaps, to discover a way with which to communicate, make sense of their world, and find relationship, which does not thwart or diminish their inner self. The compassionate community, woven from empathy and self-care, engagement and attending, and multivoiced, multilingual dialogue

welcomes, includes, and confirms this inner self. The compassionate community encourages children to trust in themselves and in one another, trusting and believing in their essential goodness: their capabilities of care as givers and receivers. As teachers, we provide a steadfastness of care for the whole child throughout the many storms and periods of harmony in our children's lives.

Closure

Engagements with visual arts and multiple expressive forms can provide sensitive languages of the heart, of the spirit, of dream, of body, and of mind that enable the expression of ineffable understandings and feelings (Langer 1942). With such a use of language we build understandings, find connections, reflect upon our world, make meaning, and share our stories. Engagements with the visual arts can provide the inspiration for meaning-making and the means through which the inner self can speak. Compassionate community provides the meeting ground for our inner selves, for our I 's and Thou's to come forth and enter into a caring relationship with one another. Both are part of one another and mutually enhance one another. When the classroom becomes a studio, a gallery, and a center of care, we open the spaces for such engagements and we invite the inner selves of our students to speak. We offer care, confirmation, understanding, and connecting rather than fear of humiliation, ridicule, being wrong, or separation.

As the three strands of care and empathy, engagement, and multivoiced and multilingual dialogue form the conceptual framework for compassionate community, so, too, they infuse our practice and become pedagogical tools for meaning-making, co-exploring, creating, and attending to our selves, each other, and our world. There are many facets to consider during the transition from theoretical contemplation to implementation and practice. There is a constellation of contextualized factors of influence that includes an understanding of teaching as a form of artistry and explicit caring, interdisciplinary and life-connected thematic planning, the use of authentic confirmational assessments, and an improvisational approach to the scheduling of time. Within this constellation, engagement, dialogue, and the languages of the arts are the primary wellspring for the development of awareness, the capabilities of empathy and attending, and inspirational envisionment. I have described the need for a reconceptualization of the intricate relationship between physical and socio-emotional-inspirational and confirmational spaces we share and that we can mutually transform, recognizing and identifying a poetics of space as being an integral consideration in the seeking of our compassionate community.

Perhaps the most essential component of transformation, is the willingness to act. Action, reflection, revision, and continued action move us into practice. Transformation and practice are ongoing events with no finite end-point, boundary, or specified destination. Care and engaged artistry are as ephemeral as a breath of wind, yet as tangible as the touch of that breath upon one's skin, and as life giving as our breathing. I ask that we summon up our courage and act upon our beliefs. The thoughts, words, and deeds of our experiences weave the relationships surrounding us: compassionate community is a process of constant becoming.



CHAPTER VIII

THE GALLERY REVIEW: IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

I return to my original vision of possibility and my open question: If we seriously seek to develop care communities in our schools can the visual arts and children's engaged art-making help us compose such communities? This chapter presents a discussion of impacts, influences, insights, and implications concerning the joining of an ethical foundation of care with the languages of the arts and engaged art-making as practiced with Wendy Oellers, myself, and the children at Gilford Elementary School. This discussion does not offer irrefutable, variable-free, nor statistically proven data. I cannot offer any absolute or replicable formula for teaching. Instead, I offer discussion and description of a highly complex and multifaceted classroom culture from which the reader may consider new directions for their teaching, their students, and their communities. I offer this discussion as a means of connecting this scholarship to that of others across diverse educational settings and situations.

This chapter begins with a brief review of intentionality and practice. This review is followed by a discussion of the growth and development of the children during our journey together, identifying the emergence of artistic grace. Artistic grace merges with the development of the children's capabilities of care and empathy as we became a compassionate community. Interviews are included here, which provide additional lenses and perspectives regarding this community. Key influences and additional impacts are addressed that still focus on the children and the classroom community. I then move to the extended community of the school and the dimensions of change as perceived by parents, faculty, and administrators. The change and growth within our class community did invite a vision for systemic change and the development of a pilot integrated-interdisciplinary-arts instructional team who are now teaching and learning with daily arts engagements. Such actualization leads to the discussion of implications for teacher education and future possibilities of practice and research. My conclusion invites more questions, presents many affirmations, and invites more envisionment.

Review of Intentionality and Practice

We dared to embark upon the actualization of a vision of education that offers an alternative to what Eisner has deemed the “business-centered competitive view of schooling and an intellectually narrow conception of mind” (Eisner 1994, p.xi). We dared to bring compassion, care, and the languages of the arts and the visual arts to explicitly central positions in our lives and in our learning. I am advocating, following the paths of Grumet, Noddings, Martin, Lowenfeld, and London (to name only a few), that teaching and learning can be forms of art that cultivate “I-Thou” meeting grounds.

Once we envision the activities of teaching and counseling as grounded
In the paradoxical relations between self and other, knower and known,
Subject and object, person and culture, feminine and masculine, thought
and feeling, being and doing, and so forth, new possibilities for moral engagement
will arise. As we seek to understand these connections, In our lives and in others’,
we may even learn some things about how to live and reinvent our lives, lessons that
can lead us to a more moral and compassionate life. A new “vision of the Songlines”
becomes, then, a vision of connection and relation, and the next stanza of the World
Song, “I am, BECAUSE WE ARE!” (Witherall, Eds. Witherall and Noddings 1994,
p.94).

The classroom was reconceptualized as a creative studio and gallery to be filled with artistic engagement and care. This shift in conceptualization dramatically influenced the shape of our discussions and planning in two main ways. First, care moved from a submerged and camouflaged shadow within the landscape of community to an explicit and pivotal position of clear centrality. We were identifying ourselves as practitioners, as role models, and as nurturers of care. Care, instead of being a hidden quality of the teacher and the learning environment, was made highly visible, explicitly intentional, and highly valued. We were practitioners and modelers of care and connected teaching (Belenky 1986).

Secondly, visual art became a valued language and methodology for acquiring knowledge, making meaning, and communicating our stories to one another. The children developed a multimodal and multilingual symbolic repertoire that, I believe, significantly enhanced the development of a caring and compassionate community and extended all aspects of the curriculum. Our multi-arts curriculum with the visual arts as an integral component, provided Wendy and the children many opportunities of sharing and exploring a diverse range of personally expressive interests, experiences, and “wonderment.” I use the term “wonderment” as Arthur Costa describes in his book, *School as a Home for the Mind*:

All thinking begins with wonderment—Socrates

Many people don't let themselves feel wonder and curiosity in the face of problems, and thus, they don't enjoy the challenge of solving problems... They perceive of thinking only as hard work and recoil from situations that demand "too much of it."

We want students to move toward not only an 'I can' attitude but also toward an "I enjoy" feeling. We want them to seek problems to solve for themselves and to give to others to solve; to make up problems to solve on their own and to request them from others. Furthermore we want students to solve problems with increasing interdependence—without parents' or teachers' help or intervention. We want them to voluntarily continue to learn throughout a lifetime, for if they don't, school has failed them.

Children and adults must actively sense the world around them, not just let it pass by. The wonders of nature promote endless thought—the changing of the seasons, the life cycle of a butterfly, the physics behind a bird in flight.

As students advance towards higher grade levels, they should derive even more pleasure from their thinking. Their curiosity will become stronger as the problems they encounter become more complex. Their environment will attract their inquiry as their senses capture the rhythm, patterns, shapes, colors, and harmonies of the universe. They will display cognizant and compassionate behavior toward other life forms as they are able to understand the need for protecting their environment, respecting the roles and values of other human beings, and perceiving the delicate worth, uniqueness, and relationships of everything and everyone they encounter. Passion, wonderment, a sense of awe: these are the prerequisites for intelligent life (Costa 1991, pp. 29-30).

I profoundly believe that the experiencing of the sensory cycle of engagement and creative process through the visual arts as core elements of learning offered the children dynamic experiential encounters and opportunities of witnessing with awe and passion that invited the development of wonderment and engagement. Accompanied by dialogic discussion, these encounters catalyzed reflection, discovery, problem-seeking and solving, conceptual transfer, application of knowledge, inspiration, and the creating of expressive forms representing the use of multiple symbol systems. The language of the visual arts as one of our valued symbol systems offered a particularly personal and individualized form of expression that was accessible to all.

...for both the teacher and child, the arts offer an expanded notion of classroom discourse that is not solely grounded in linear, objective language and thinking but rather, recognizes the full range of human potential for expression and understanding (Gallas 1991, p.22)

The arts and visual art offer an innately empathetic and relational mode of discourse that engages the imagination. Through imagination and empathy, we can connect and find relationship with others, we can see, hear, feel, and experience another's world. As Greene projects, "if others are willing to give us clues, we can look in some manner through strangers' eyes and hear through their ears" (Greene 1995, p.3). Imagination and empathy are powerful interrelated capabilities that can help us to find one another's "I-Thou" and relationship to our world.

It may well be the imaginative capacity that allows us also to experience
Empathy with different points of view, even with interests apparently at odds with ours.
Imagination may be a new way of decentering ourselves, of breaking out of the
confinements of privatism and self-regard into a
Space where we can come face to face with others and call out,
“Here we are” (Greene 1995, p.31).

Working with Wendy Oellers at Gilford Elementary School, she and I became co-explorers sharing a vision of possibility. We explored together the design and implementation of an instructional-pedagogical framework that fully wove the visual arts and engaged art-making into the fabric of her curriculum and into the daily lives of the children in her class. This framework was developed from three essential strands: empathy and self-care, engagement and perceptual sensitivity, and multivoiced-multilingual dialogue. Visual art would provide a language with which to develop and enhance these strands. Our goal was to develop *the capacities of care and empathy* in the children as we became *a compassionate community*. A unique feature of the learning process this year was *the presence of the visual arts and engaged art-making* as core components of the curriculum woven into the daily learning of the children.

The Children: Artistic Grace

Let us begin this discussion by entering the classroom, by entering our studio permeated with care. Here we find the direct impact of visual arts engagements and the strands used to weave compassionate community.

Story: An Afternoon with Bugs

Springtime. We are drawing and sketching insects: imaginary insects, insects from observation, insects under a magnifying glass, insects inspired by researched illustrations and photographs—from fiction and non-fiction sources, and from remembered insect encounters. Julie and Katlyn are collaborating as they create their own illustrated book of bees. Kerri is drawing a giant detailed bee as observed through a magnifying glass. Brian invents his map-bug. David is peering into a cross-section of a real wasp hive and creating a wasp world. Mariah invents a dress-up bug. Some of the children are using pencils, others are using crayons, craypas, and mixed medias. Michael interprets an ant’s eye view of the classroom while Kyle decides to show the ant’s eye view of lego city followed by a detailed drawing of an ant colony habitat beneath the ground. The room hums with synergy, concentration, and engagement [see samples].

This is an encounter with insects, a witnessing of insect worlds, and ongoing wonderment. There is no right way to make an insect image, no narrowly conceived expectations to conform to, and certainly no perfect or better way regarding adult imposed picture standards. The children's collaboratively accepted standard is quality—trying one's personal best and not rushing. There is an intensity of activity, deep involvement, and personalization of learning. Ideas are shared as are materials. There is a sense of joy and pride in the process of learning and creating. Costa would identify this as wonderment. The children have the opportunity to express and communicate their knowledge, their imaginings, their experiences, and their fascination for insects using an expressive language. This language enables the children to communicate and re-present their understandings using highly personalized visual symbols and imagery.

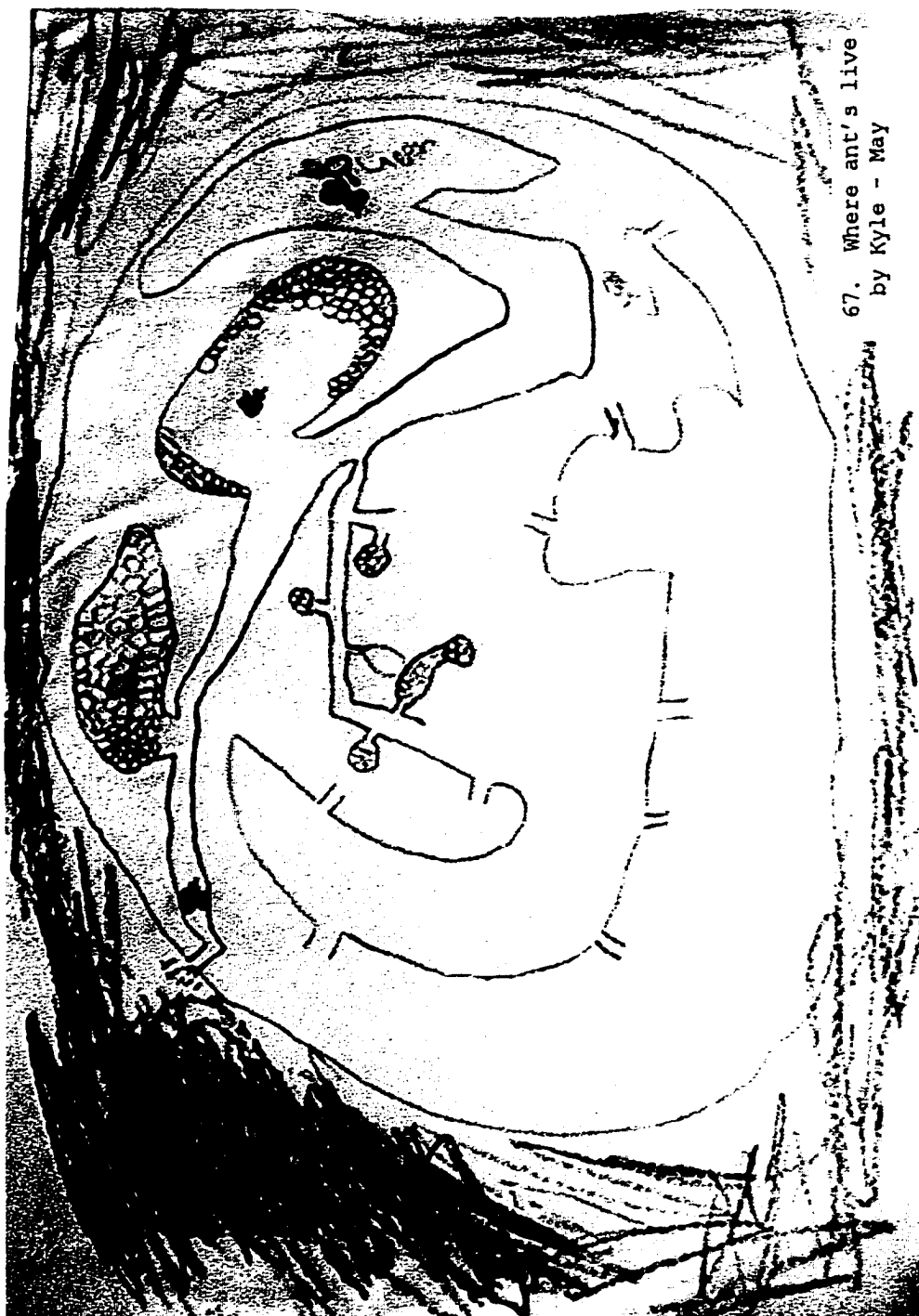
As Kerri peers into the magnifying glass, she is deeply engaged in the examination and observation of her world. She concentrates her perceptual attention on this tiny bee enhancing her sensory awareness and discovering the unique attributes of this bee. She is also able to give tangible, visible form to her responses and her discoveries from this observation, which she shares with others sitting at the table and later during discussion and gallery exhibition. Sensory observations and their interpretation guide the process. Today, art-making provides the children with the opportunity to wonder, to deeply engage, to share ideas, to utilize metaphorical thinking, and even empathize with insects. How is the texture of craypas like the furry surface of a bee? How are swirly marks like the feeling of flying in the wind? What would the world be like underground in an ant colony or inside a beehive? [see samples].

"What would the world be like for an ant?" asks Michael as he organizes his drawing. His question inspires Kyle who asks, "What would I see if I were an ant? What would an ant see?" They both flop down to the floor wriggling like ants and look around the room trying to become ants and experience their world in a different way. Not only do they both engage in empathetic projection-reception as they try to perceive their world as ants, they consider and apply their knowledge of insect body structure gained from detailed observation, (from life and from books) and they consider complex proportional and scale relationships. Certainly they are extending and applying their knowledge of insects while utilizing critical, creative, and relational thinking processes. Wendy has told me that Michael excels in reading, writing, and mathematical brain-teasers, while Kyle is highly challenged with verbal and written language. Yet they collaborate with their ideas. They engage in discussion with one another finding common ground here and

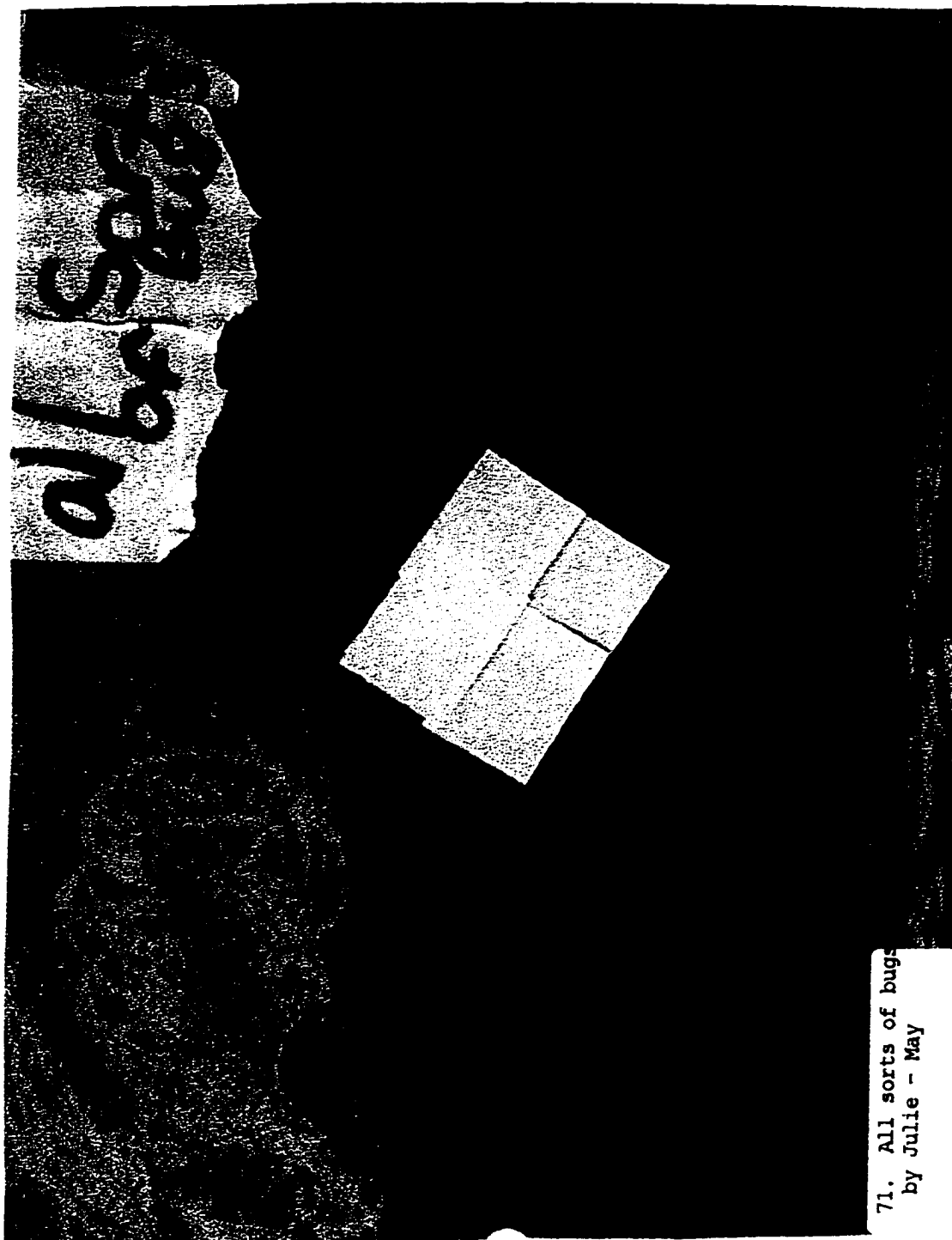


66. Ants' eye view
and Ant Colony by
Michael - May



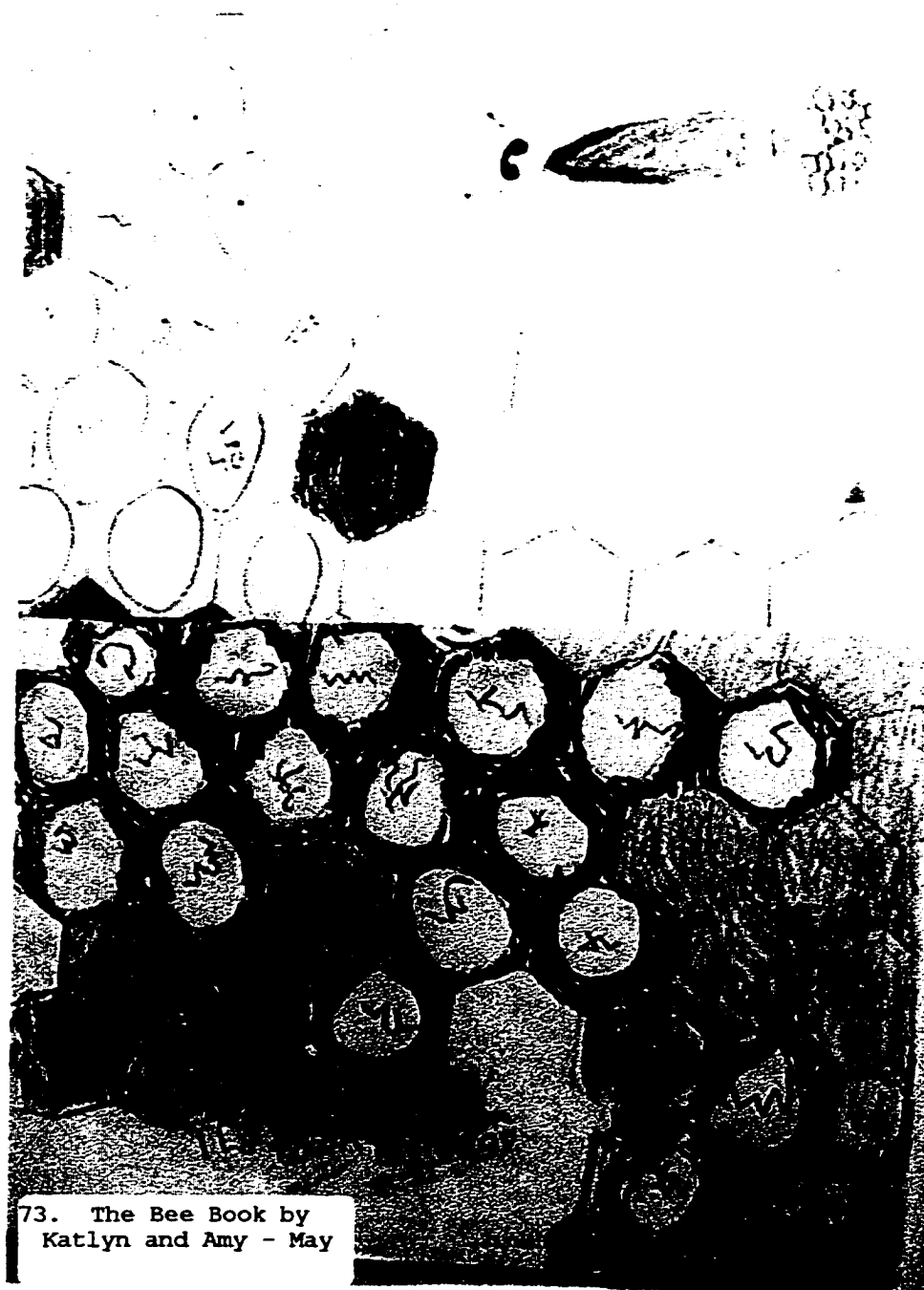


67. Where ant's live
by Kyle - May



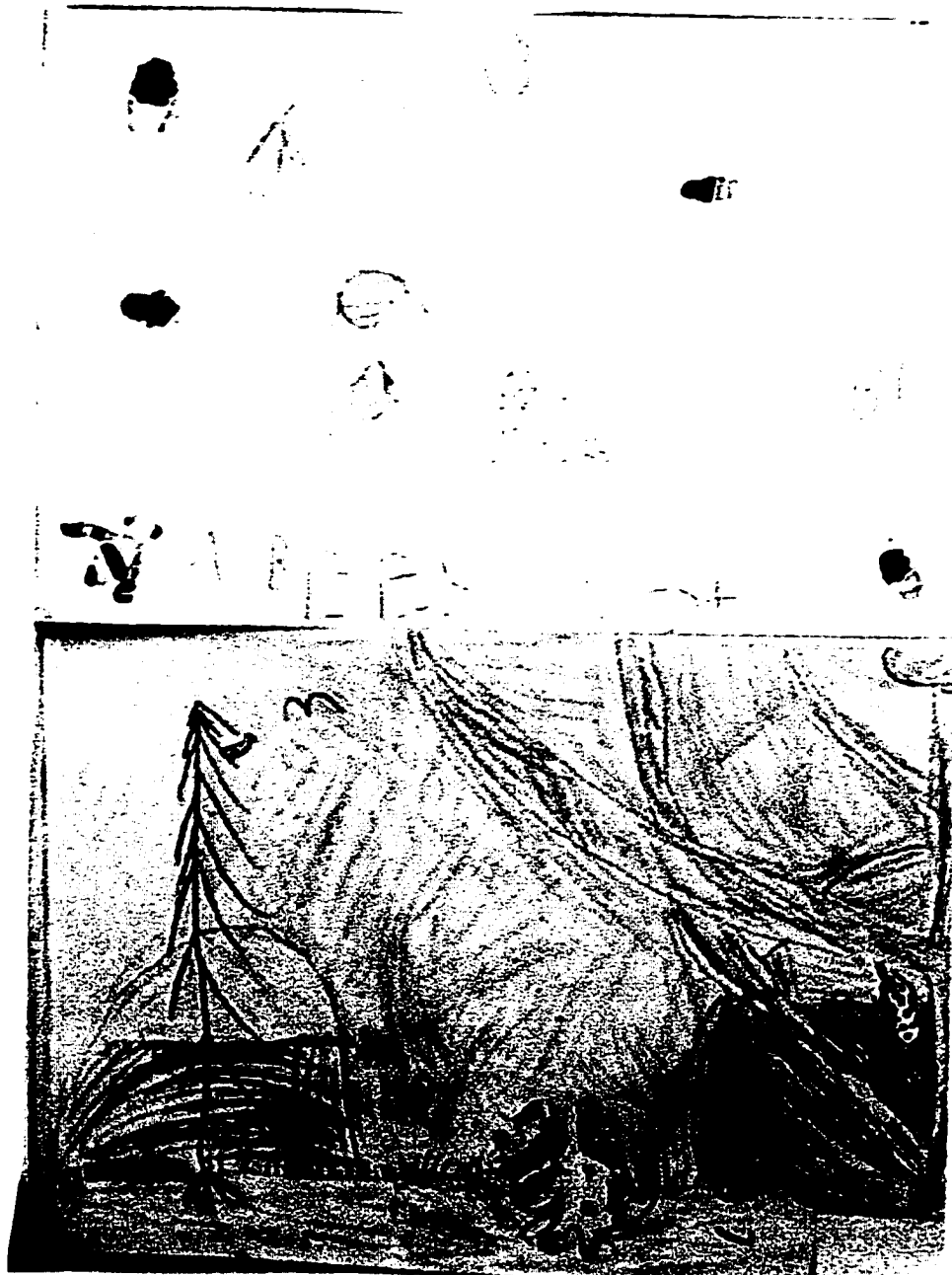


72. The Map Bug by
Brian - May

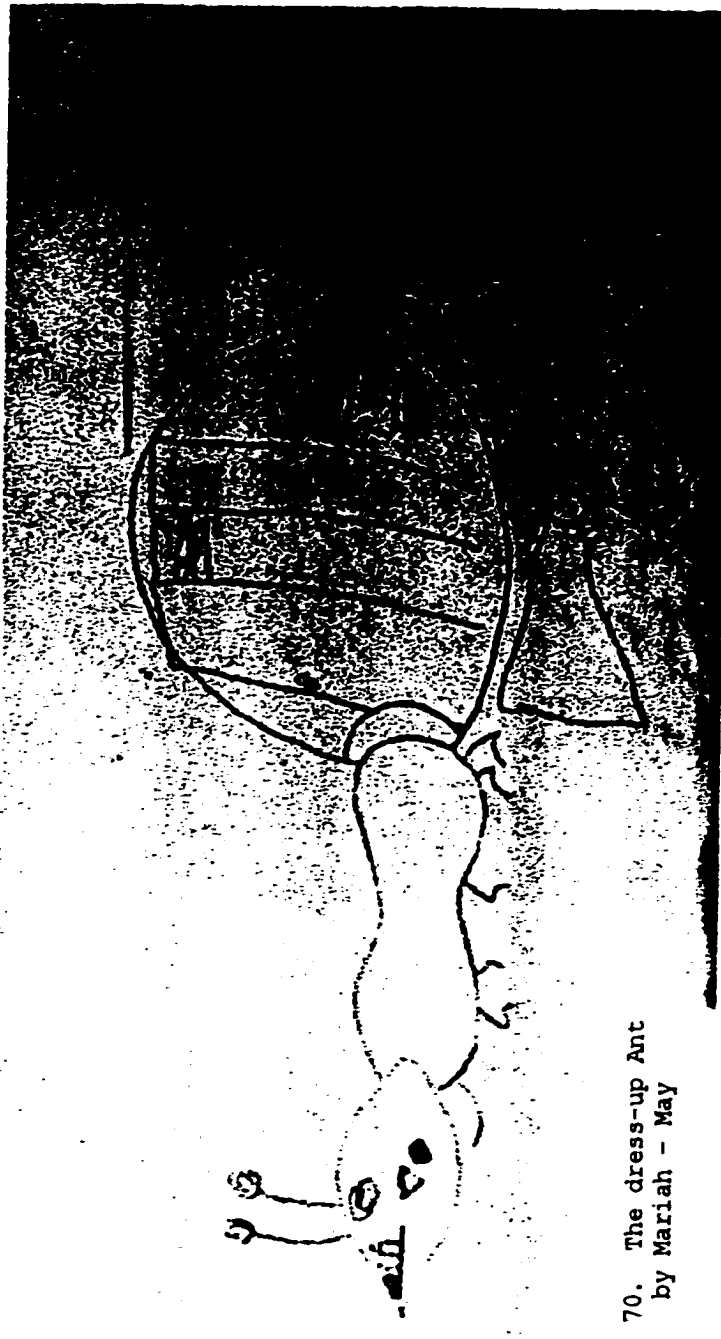


73. The Bee Book by
Katlyn and Amy - May





46. Ant Colony by
David / Beehive by
Jesse - May



70. The dress-up Ant
by Mariah - May

mutually inspiring each other. They respectfully and enthusiastically share their ideas. Kyle, through his drawing, is able to express his richly detailed observations and researched knowledge of ants, which otherwise could have remain uncommunicated and unknown due to his difficulty with verbal language forms [see samples].

When the children share their insect images, there is a sense of mutual interests and discovery. The images are given attention and listened-to with care and respect. Comments indicate, “I like how...that’s so cool...look how you can see...or You could do this, too...” As with the mobiles, ideas become shared inspirations and each invention and image is respected as representing the ideas and feelings of the artist. Children helped each other with problem-solving and elaboration. As with Katlyn’s earlier response to a color mixed by Terry, “Wow!! Alien guts!” the enjoyment and appreciation of each other’s work, became inspirational. Alien guts the color, became the inspiration for Katlyn to illustrate and write her book *A Really Cool Alien* [see sample in Appendix E]. Alien guts as interpreted by Katlyn was “really soft colors” to Terry as he indicated in his title for this particular painting. Even a color is perceived and metaphorically interpreted individualistically.

Self-Care and Artistic Grace

The opportunity for the children to express and communicate their understandings, experiencings, and questionings of the world through many valued symbol systems enables all their voices to be heard. They can all participate and contribute as active learners—as co-constructors of knowledge and culture. The confident sense of “I can!” “I am an artist!!!” “I have an idea!” permeates the classroom. This confidence and enthusiasm dramatically replaced the early September self-doubts, hesitancy, and “I can’t draw—I’m not an artist” self-attitudes. This blossoming sense of creative self-confidence, joy, and pride was shared by all (although developed at varying personal rates and eddying through individual currents of emotional need throughout the year) and directly impacts one’s inner sense of self-confidence and capability.

I observed what I name a sense of “self-grace” as artists. Noddings uses the term “grace” when she describes care for one’s self.

I am using “grace” to emphasize the integration of body, mind, and spirit. It certainly has a physical connotation: we all admire the grace of dancers and gymnasts. But it also points to the spiritual dimension of life, connoting a special relation

to spirit. Further, in all its meanings it points to something that is only partly in our control. It recognizes the gifts and limitations with which we are all born, and it draws our attention to appreciative forms of acceptance. It is, especially, an integrative concept (Noddings 1992, p. 48).

I believe that such a state of grace is also accompanied by a state of inner harmony and fluidity—confidence and lack of anxiety. Art-making is a process that integrates body, mind, heart, and spirit (Lowenfeld 1958, Burton 1983, Smith 1983, and London 1989). Such an integration is one of harmony and fluidity however temporary. Familiarity and practice with art-making media, tools, and, materials develops facility, coordination, and fluency (Smith 1983, Lowenfeld, Grallert 1991, and Howard 1991). Combining the integration of mind, body, heart, and spirit, with fluency and familiarity provides the opportunity for such grace to develop. The ongoing practice and modeling of care and compassion provided the sustenance. Both became part of one another. As the children explored and created, their artistic grace continued to grow. The children's ideas and feelings were constantly being confirmed by our valuing and support for their highly personal imagery. Later, this confirmation was extended by the children themselves as they learned to value the diversity and uniqueness of each others' images and to listen to one another's voices within the images.

The development of this shared artistic-creative confidence or artistic grace, was an important factor in the ongoing emergence of community relationships. It established a wellspring of capability, confidence, and empathy all could draw from. We enhanced this wellspring by providing an environment that encouraged diversity of expression and that not only valued but also confirmed each voice.

Confirmation

Confirmation, the loveliest of human functions, depends upon and interacts with dialogue and practice. I cannot confirm a child unless I talk with him and engage in cooperative practice with him....simply to have high expectations of our students in general is not confirmation. It is just another form of product control. To confirm, I must see and receive the other—see clearly what he has actually done, and receive the feelings with which it was done (Noddings 1984, p. 196).

Certainly we were moving away from the business centered, factory model of schools Eisner and Martin warn against where the practice of confirmation, critical care, and the arts would have minimal opportunities to be practices and consequently to blossom. I question how many voices have been lost, diminished, and stifled? I ask how many artistic voices never began to grow? All I have to do is consider, once again, the voices of my adult university students as a chorus of "I can't" concerning speaking and

creating with the visual arts. Their personal narratives concerning the arts and school conveyed a high sense of product control and rigid norms for production. Instead of product control, we modeled confirmation and critical care for the children's individuality of expression and visual story. Thus, the children could trust the steadfastness of our confirmation for their individuality and our collective togetherness. We also believed in the process of practice, grace, making special, and focusing on the internal motivation do one's best when making is relevant and personalized.

Art-making further became a time when students could completely please themselves through their creative expressions and not worry over trying to please the teacher by making images that catered to their perception of the teacher's aesthetic criteria. Wendy and the children had collaboratively decided that their criteria would be doing one's personal best and not rushing. Best would have varied configurations since the manifestations of visual expression are unique to each child. As artists, all the images would be different, would express the individual's ideas and feelings. Looking at the works of diverse artists and illustrators gave further concrete evidence of valuing artistic diversity. Their collaborated criteria provided for individual variation. The sampling of children's work collected here is a small indication of that diversity. The children could work for their personal pride and fulfillment, not for an external judge. A significant absence in this class was the tentative asking of questions such as "Do you like my picture? Is it okay? Is it good enough?" which indicate the need for externally applied values and external approval. The absence of these questions indicated growing self-confidence and independence of aesthetic decision-making.

Grallert (1991) describes such a situation of internalized motivation as "working from the inside out". The practice of visual art-making, she asserts, enables children to communicate and express inside-out ideas and feelings. However, this practice needs to occur within the context of care for each individual child. When individuality is so confirmed and cherished, it becomes a source for learning, and caring: caring for one's personal ideas and feelings, caring for tools and materials, caring for one's world, and caring for the ideas and feelings of others. Grallet (1991) adds the enablement of doing. In essence, we have enabled the doing of care. This doing of care became extended during the time when images were shared within our discussion circles and our gallery. Because the children were working from the inside out, their images were meaning laden and full of personal stories (Stefan's universe, Jesse's Dad in jail,

Kyle's soul going to heaven, Mariah's sad day on the playground, Jeff's loss of his friend—see samples). Not only were diverse kinds of images valued and respected, these stories were listened to and discussed with attention. We could enter into one another's stories, could know one another more deeply and cultivate relationships with one another based on empathy and connection. Through such encounters with one another's visual images/stories we could step into another's world.

All works of art hold meaning. Through critical interpretation to locate meaning in works of art, the viewer experiences an interplay between form and content inside and context outside a work. Stepping into historical and cultural contexts provides a view of the variety of worlds surrounding the imagery. Stepping into the work itself reveals the internal stylistic, metaphoric, iconic, formal, or expressive relevance....questioning and conversational encounters become political acts as they open possibilities for change through self and societal introspection and reflection. All the while, these cognitive understandings extend insights into more meaningful ideational, expressive, and instrumental components for personal artmaking (Yorkley, 1999, p. 20).

Such stepping into did catalyze conversation, questioning, and interpersonal encounters. We stepped into with a concern for expressive and metaphorical meanings that could catalyze ongoing reflection, the finding of personal associations and extend expressive vocabularies.

A critical component of actualized confirming of the children's art and the language of the visual arts was providing time every day for making art. Equitable time for art engagements concretely represented our valuing of art-making rather than allocating only extra and inconsistent time for making art. This daily time for art-making was consistent with time given to other learning activities—all of which needed consistent practice and application for the children's growth and development in these areas. The children needed the opportunity to become familiar with media and materials and to gain a personal and shared repertoire of manipulative possibilities. They needed time to see what happens—to experiment and explore, to gain coordination and skill, to develop individual perception, and confidence. As the children became familiar with and skilled with various media, they also developed preferences and were enabled to make independent media choices for their art-making.

This simultaneously meant a letting go of traditional teacher control and traditional concerns for good-looking products (according to standardized adult enculturated normative standards). Since the core of art-making is the inside-out of personal experiencing and expression, standardized expectations and uniformity are the antithesis of artistic process (Lowenfeld 1958, Burton 1983, London 1989, and Smith 1983). During the early fall months of September and October, the children consistently tested us on this

issue. “It’s my picture. I’m the artist. I can make it any color I want. Right Mrs. V.?” By the end of October, such questioning stopped. The children no longer needed assurance that they really could make art that expressed their ideas and interpretations. We provided a steadfast confirmation of their selves and their artwork and they could trust our belief in their artistry and our valuing of their highly individualized expressions. Essentially, we practiced and modeled caring for each child as an individual as we simultaneously cared for and gave of our attention to their artworks—manifestations of their inner selves—thus we cared for and gave attention to their inner selves and opened the spaces for I-Thou meetings. In return, the children could also attend to one another.

A fundamental change in consciousness was the children’s consideration of themselves as artists, as manifested early (October) in their work revolving around the theme of “I AM AN ARTIST” [see samples]. This changed a very pervasive cultural stereotype of artists being an elite category of exceptionally talented or professional beings labeled artists (Dissanayake 1992).

The artist is not a special kind of man [woman],
but every man [woman] is a special kind of artist.
(Meister Eckhart quoted by Corita, 1992, p. 11).

Art-making became a small “a” inclusive experience rather than as a capital “A” elite experience (Grallert 1991, Kent 1992, and Dissanayake 1991). As such, art-making was a part of each of us, each of us was a capable artist. Art was for each child—not just specially “talented” people our culture labels as “artists.” Essentially, we modeled critical care for each child as an individual as we simultaneously cared for and gave our attention to their artworks. Through their shared artworks, the children could ponder their experiences, assimilate new information, and experience multivoiced stories and perspectives that developed pathways of empathy and understanding.

Artistic Growth and Development

The discussion of “artistic grace” folds into the children’s artistic growth and development. Although I was not specifically studying this component of the children’s growth and development, this growth was so intricately intertwined with the development of artistic grace, heartfelt voice, empathy, perceptual sensitivity, story making and story telling I must try and describe the basic characteristics of this growth. Such growth may be observed in many ways using many different sets of criteria. I believe that Lowenfeld provides an extremely sensitive and comprehensive set of evaluation and description criteria

that identify multiple areas of interrelated growth and consider artistic growth and development within the context of the whole child.

We have to remember again and again that being highly developed in one area of achievement is still an old concept to which we do not like to subscribe. We still tend to think of the classroom as the room in which learning takes place and not growth. Learning deals mainly with developing the intellect by the accumulation of knowledge. When we make such statements, we are still in our mind, a little bit old fashioned, because we still think of the compartmentalization of the child...Now we think of the total growth of the child, "the child as a whole" you know...But what we do in our educational system to promote it is another question (Lowenfeld 1958, Ed. Michael, 1982, pp. 179-80).

Children's art-making, emphasizes Lowenfeld (1958), deals with all facets of their growth.

Lowenfeld articulates six areas of growth that can be manifested through children's visual art-making while emphasizing that these various components should be viewed in relation to one another just as they are unified within the child's image: Intellectual, Emotional, Social, Perceptual, Physical, Aesthetic, and Creative. Since each of these terms is significantly loaded with meanings, it is vital to understand the sense in which Lowenfeld applies these terms. Lowenfeld identifies intellectual growth as reflecting the child's active knowledge, which can be used in the child's drawing. He believes that this active knowledge correlates with cognitive intellectual growth and is manifested through the presence of details. Emotional growth "is the growth responsible for the individual's adjustments to new situations, for his/her flexibility...in children's drawings the most reliable factor is the absence of stereotypes (Lowenfeld 1958, Ed. Michael, 1982, p.88). Another indicator is the use of changing schemata and the use of schemata with variation; a sign of flexibility and adaptability. "Social growth begins with the identification of one's own needs, and then it gradually shifts to the identifying with the needs of others, thus ending with a cooperative attitude (Lowenfeld 1958, Ed. Michael, 1982, p.89). Lowenfeld identifies four criteria in this area as a continuum of development: 1) repetition of the same thing, which indicates an inability to identify with one's own needs and use of the thing as a means of escaping self, 2) generalizations where all kinds of a subject or object are represented in the same manner without differentiation of characteristics (Lowenfeld believed that differentiation required an extension of one's self towards other), 3) characterization, which is the recognition and interpretation of differences, 4) the establishment of spatial relationships, which manifests the child's ability to meaningfully express the relationships between figures, objects, and environments. Perceptual growth involves the ability to observe and interpret sensory qualities and

characteristics such as textures, patterns, light and shadow, or qualities of color. Physical growth is basically motor coordination. Aesthetic growth refers to the child's growing "ability to harmoniously organize his/her thinking and feeling and perceiving in relationship to the drawing area which he/she have at their disposal" (Lowenfeld 1958, Ed. Michael 1982, p. 91). Creative growth refers to the child's independence of creating and imaging, their generation of personalized images, and their willingness to constantly explore and investigate.

This form of evaluation is not to provide judgements of good or bad, of more capable or less capable. This evaluation process is to help the teacher better know and understand the child.

Evaluation is primarily for the sake of learning to know the children better and thus penetrate their thinking, their feeling, their perceiving, learning to identify ourselves better with their needs is one of the prime aspects of evaluation (Lowenfeld 1958, Ed. Michael 1982, p.83).

In this sense, Lowenfeld's approach to evaluation is a means for the teacher to enhance the giving of care to students. His criteria also provide a means of ascertaining the growth and development of care relations, awareness of self and other, engagement, and dialogic voice. Lowenfeld emphasizes that no two children are alike and as we discuss the qualities of children's artwork, we must remember that this discussion is framed in generalities concerning development and characteristics of imagery. Our purpose is understanding not labeling. As presented in Chapter six, the children in a first-grade class may represent a continuum of artistic developmental stages usually ranging from what Lowenfeld terms Scribbling (two–four years old), Pre-schematic (four–seven years old), and (Schematic seven–nine years old). I have prepared two charts, *Lowenfeld's Evaluation Criteria and Questions and Children's Artistic Development: Visual Characteristics* [see samples], in order to provide a guide to the use of Lowenfeld's six criteria in conjunction with the developmental stages. (See chapter six for a detailed description of artistic developmental stages and Appendix A for a chart diagramming these stages).

I have presented throughout this dissertation, examples of many artworks created by the children in our first-grade class. These artworks provide specific examples for consideration that, I believe, exemplify the diversity of the children's personalized art-making, their growth and development through the school year, and their artistic grace. I have grouped selected artworks into mini-collections beginning with the works of four individual children: Jesse, Kyle, Julie, and Stefan. Here I present multiple samples of each child's artwork representing individual growth and a diversity of individual imagery. These

collections are followed by four group collections representing artworks by many children that revolve around central themes: Bugs, Mariah the Cockateel, Stories, and Rain. Many works have been previously identified and discussed and are available to review with Lowenfeld's Criteria in mind. Due to concerns of space, only a few images are located here. Additional artworks are presented in Appendix B.

Jesse

Jesse's work begins with highly undifferentiated and general schema with minimal body parts and detail, with no sense of spatial-environmental relationships, and minimal confidence. His schema slowly develops more details while beginning to interact with one another and the environment. Jesse did encounter extreme emotional stress at home during the fall months, which he was able to articulate in his drawing of his Dad in jail. Note how the size of the jail schema dominates his image. Jesse constantly repeated drawings of airplanes and space stations throughout this time indicating what Lowenfeld might interpret as an escape into these images. However, his self-portrait displays his willingness to explore the salient sensory features of his face and draw with a new media. He notices many details and coordinates natural spatial locations of these features. By the springtime, his drawing of the beehive shows his capabilities of incorporating highly detailed observed information, knowledge, and environmental location in his drawings. He combines media as a personal choice to express detail and texture. I have included his first drawing from second grade, a tree drawn outside from observation, as an example of his development relative to the observation of proportions, natural location, patterns, and details.

Kyle

Kyle's drawings exhibited his sensitivity toward spatial, social, and environmental relationships as early as October. His figure schema are active, have moving body parts, have details of clothing, and interact with one another. All his images tell a story. The writing that appears on his drawings is due to the weaving of art-making with writing. As mentioned previously, Kyle would image first and then slowly write. His painting of his *Soul Going To Heaven* combines new sensory explorations of paint with attention to facial features. Color was specifically chosen to express the sky, the blood on the wolf's mouth, and the color of the wolf. The texture of the wolf's fur was intentional. This portrait becomes an inner reflection and communicates Kyle's concerns of being bitten by a rabid wolf, of dying, and going to heaven. All the

parts are in relationship to one another, are in aesthetic harmony relative to the image as a whole.

Significant in Kyle's developing artworks is his choice to use pencil—a media he can control and use to express a great deal of tiny detail that he uses to characterize his subjects.

Additional work using the media of craypas, not photographed, was extremely sensitive to texture. Kyle invented tree texture by using the side of the craypas and long softly pressured strokes. He then inventively collaged small bits of real bark and leaves and moss to his tree trunk that the children had collected during a nature walk. Another unique feature of his work was his combination of rich detail with multiple elevations and planes. Lowenfeld interprets the combination of such elevations and planes as depicting time and space relationships. By spring, his ant colony drawing manifests his observation of detail, his motor control, aesthetic planning, and awareness of relationships of space and location. Particularly interesting to Kyle, throughout the year, was the subject of underground places and burrows. Kyle inspired the drawing of underground root systems and animal homes during the collaborative forest mural. During the making of the winter mural he designed the bear caves. His bird drawing includes a worm in its underground home. As previously described, Kyle was exceptionally empathetically sensitive with many motor skill challenges. Certainly his drawings evidence his social emotional sensitivity and his ability to convey his knowledge and experience through highly personal images.

Julie

Julie's drawings provide an extensive glimpse into an individual who became extremely fascinated with art-making and who kept independently drawing everyday during personal choice times, indoor recess, and story time. Her images reflect a willingness to explore and vary her schema fully and fluidly depending upon intention and media. Her images convey sensitive spatial-environmental relationships including the elaboration of details and decorative patterns, overlapping, use of diminishing size, and horizon lines. Additionally her images are thoughtfully and intentionally organized with attention to aesthetic balance. Julie began experimenting with observational-representational drawings during her encounter with my sketchbook. This particular image has extremely detailed and precise visual information relative to details, spatial relationships, and the environment. I only have two other photographs of her spontaneous observational drawings, Misha the hamster and a chick from chick hatching. She actually drew many more of these drawings as she was fascinated by the chicks and the hamsters. These drawings again

evidence her independent motivation, her capability of observing and translating details, of moving away from schema and into more naturalistic representation when she desired, and awareness of spatial and environmental relationships.

Stefan

Stefan's drawings also begin with early body schema without a sense of spatial relationship or location. He spent a great deal of time sensorily manipulating art materials and enjoying their sensory kinesthetic qualities. He particularly enjoyed the tactility of craypas and the mobility of tempera cake watercolors. His first detail images were of motorboats and underwater fishing—subjects of direct experience and interest. His imagery changed dramatically in February when he drew his *Universe*. Here is an elaborately detailed image representing active knowledge and direct observational experience. The media is extremely well controlled and the entire image is thoughtfully organized and developed. He was completely engaged for over an hour as he developed this image. Everything expressed is in precise relationship and represents his detailed understanding of the solar system. This image conveyed not only his knowledge of the universe but enable Stefan to verbally articulate his understanding and fascination of telescopes. From this time forward, his images become elaborately detailed and located as in his *Tour Boat on the Lake*. These later images also display complex spatial relationships, overlapping, diminishing size, and incorporation of an horizon line, Stefan did not include many people in his images, he focused his attention on machines, animals, and the natural environment.

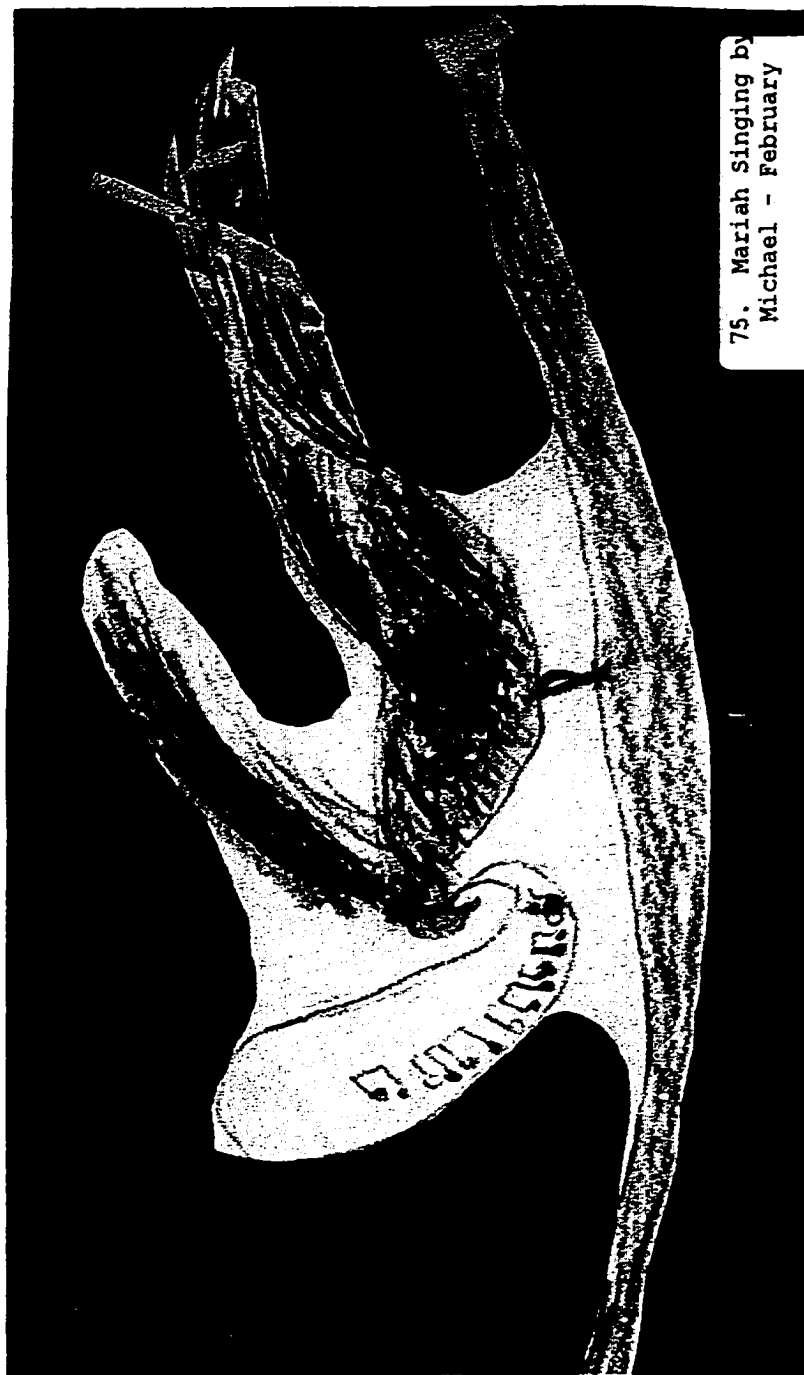
All of these children, I believe, by the spring time of the year were creating images with many differentiated details of characterization, highly individualized imagery, observational sensitivity, flexibility of schematic usage, and harmonious organization of parts that were in relation to the whole image. All these children explored a wide range of media and media possibilities and chose media according to their expressive intents. These characteristics indicate a strong level of development according to Lowenfeld's criteria for social, emotional, aesthetic, and creative growth. The children have discovered and acknowledged themselves as part of a larger environment. They are not alone in the world. Egocentric responding has developed into empathetic responding, growing self-awareness, awareness of relationships, and heightened perceptual sensitivity of others and the world.

Bugs

These drawings of bugs and bees represent the diversity of the children's approaches to drawing, their personalized selection of media and format, their use of characterization and detail, and awareness of environmental-spatial relationships. These drawings also represent the children's capabilities of utilizing sensory information gained from a variety of sources: direct observation, photographic pictorial information, expressively illustrated pictorial information, and kinesthetic information gained from dramatizing the life cycle of bees. The drawings reflect the children's differing fascinations concerning insects including sustained observational studies and magnifications, individual insects, insects in their environment, imaginary insects, or remembered insects. The details within these drawings incorporate a diversity of expressive marks and lines, sensory-tactile awareness, proportional and scale observations, and a sensitive use of media for intentional purposes. Mariah's drawing of the dress-up bug is incomplete as is Brian's map bug. They are incomplete because both of the children used these as idea drawings and continued their development in a second drawing. These actions exemplify their engagement and motivational involvement. All the drawings, I believe, further demonstrate the individual expressivity of the children and their capabilities of sharing ideas with one another and mutually inspiring one another without any diminishment of individuality.

Mariah the Cockateel

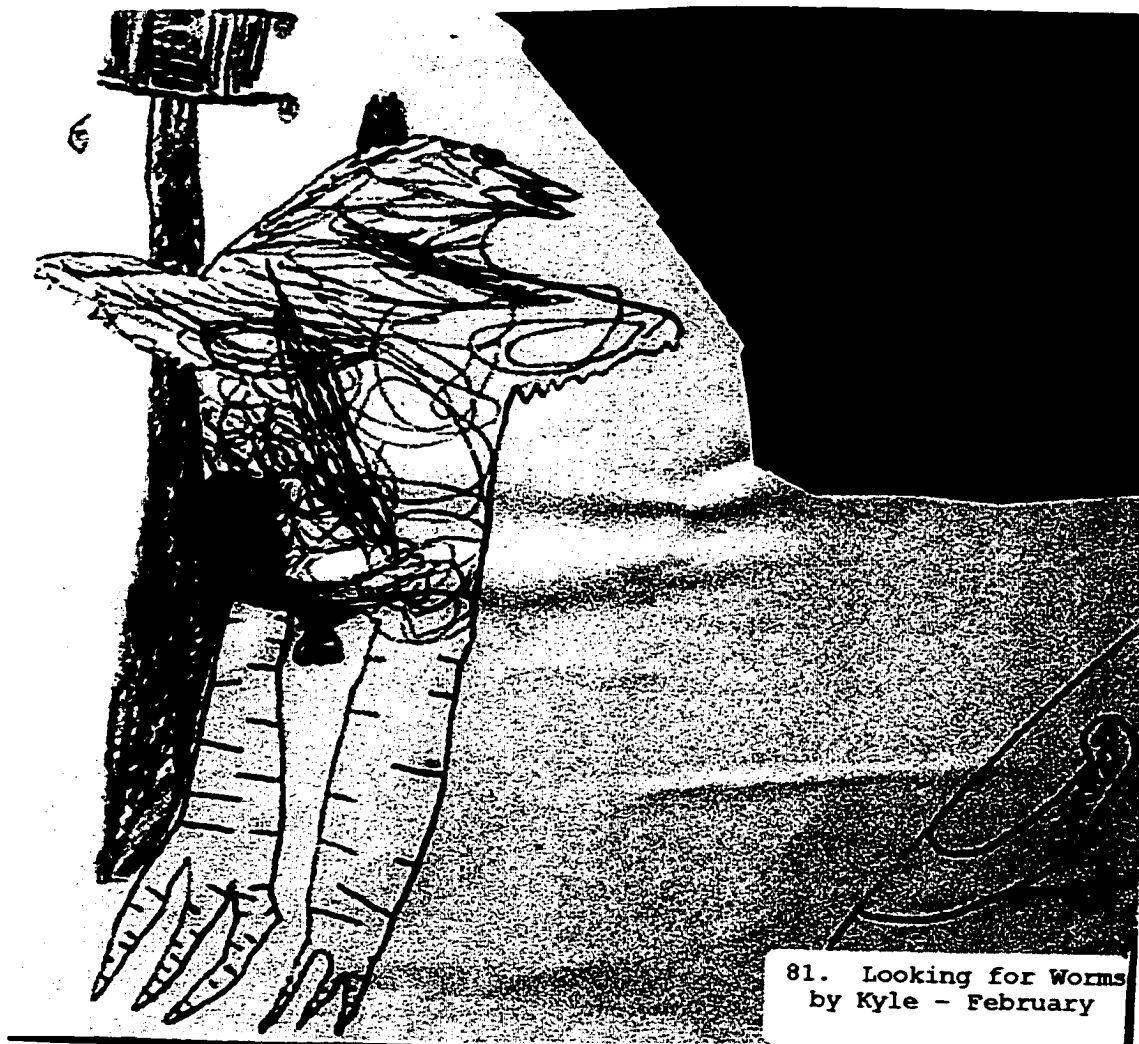
I selected these observational-interpretive multi-media drawings to document the diversity of interpretation, the depth of the children's detailed observations (perceptual sensitivity), and their awareness of spatial-environmental relationships. The children have each developed quite elaborate images that depart from schematic interpretation and express a diversity of individuality. The selection of specific attributes of characterization and decorative pattern change with each child's interpretation and are dependent upon the individual's salient sensory responses, observations, and fascinations. Michael even adds singing notes to indicate how noisy Mariah could be. Some of the children included her cage with all the parts of the cage—including Mariah's toys—whereas Michael drew her on a branch and then cut out the entire drawing and glued it onto blue paper. Empathy for Mariah? Although each bird varies in size and shape, each presents sensitively observed proportions and structural form. The media of pencil exhibits precision and control of quality of line and ability to portray tiny details of pattern and texture. The watercolor application indicates





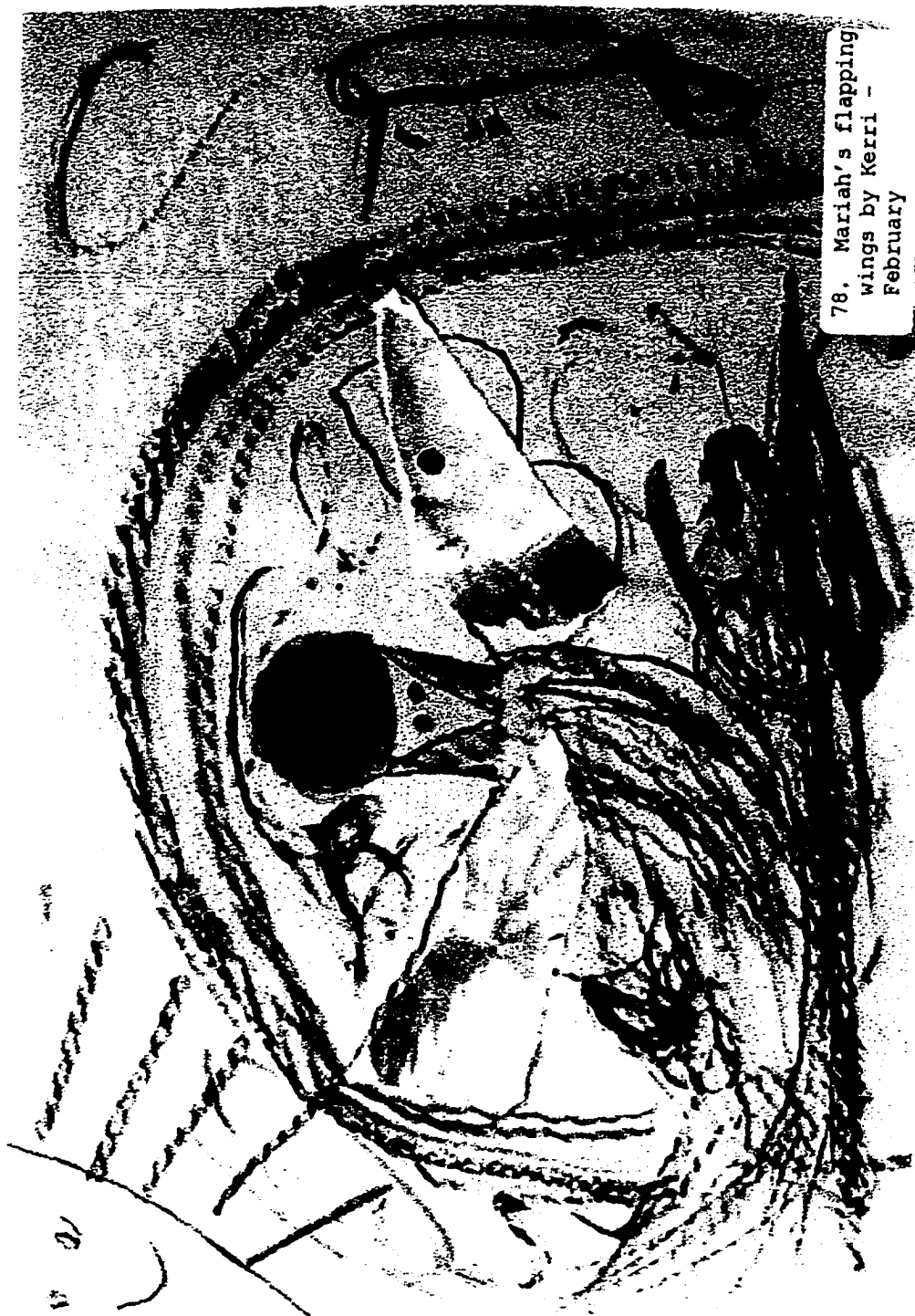


76. Feathery
Cockateel by Katlyn
- February





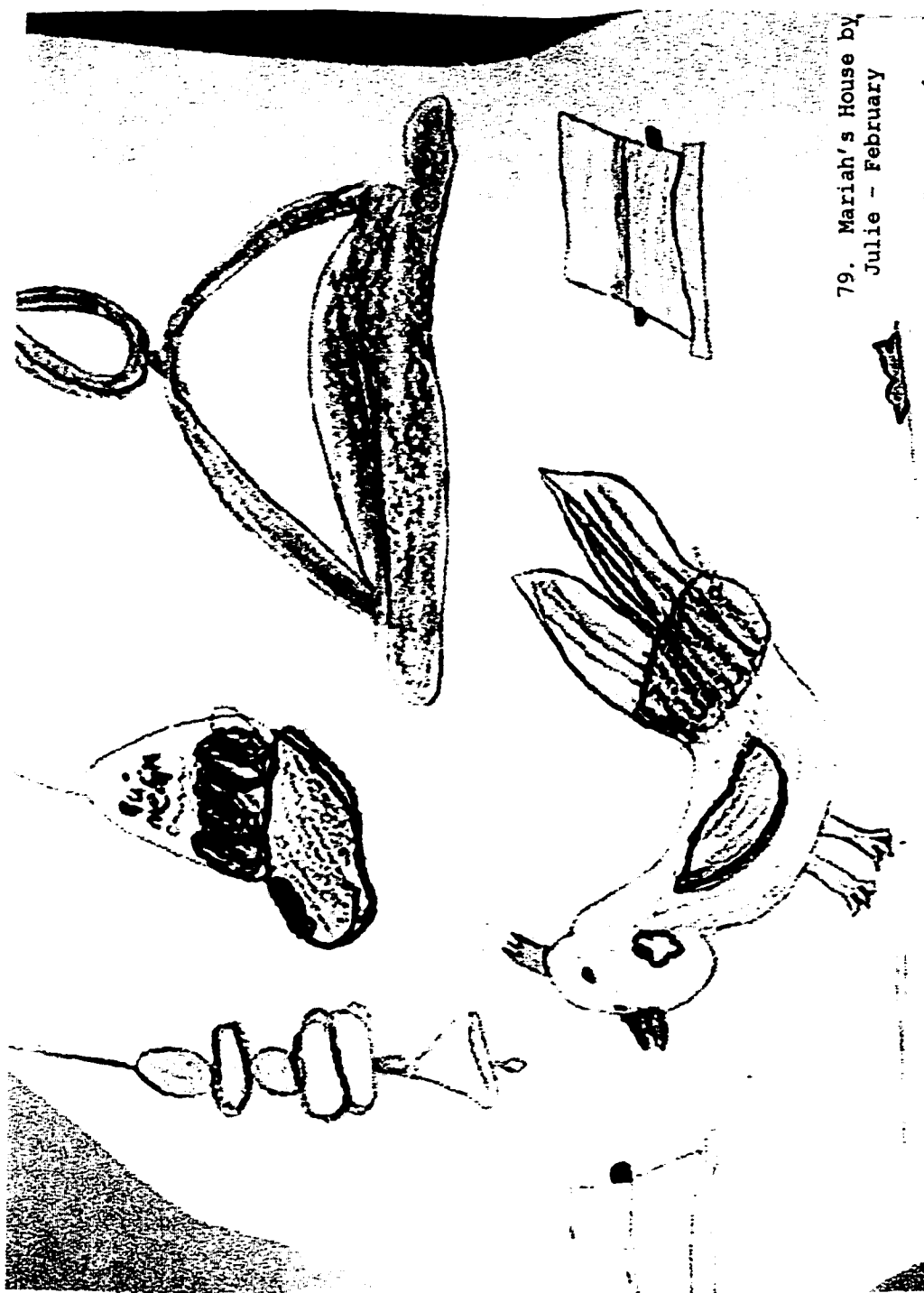
80. The Feather Nest
by Maggy - February



78. Mariah's flapping
wings by Kerri -
February



77. Mariah with
feathery patterns by
Jeff - February



79. Mariah's House by
Julie - February

a sense of freedom to exploit the fluid qualities of the media relative to colormixing, texturing, layering colors, and using expressive brushmarks. The use of color ranges from sensitive matching to interpretive invention. Textures and pattern interweave. Mariah engaged all of the children's attention for many days as she lived in the studio-classroom. These drawings are a tremendous departure from any stereotypic interpreting and individualized schema. The direct experiences of observing and holding Mariah are manifest in the sensory sensitivity of these drawings. These drawings capture the story of the children's fascination for Mariah while these next drawings capture more personally inward stories.

Stories

Mariah's playground drawing vividly demonstrates her ability to use imaging to express her feelings. She was lonely and sad because no one would play with her. The drawing also demonstrates her detailed awareness of the spatial-environmental space of the playground and her location apart from the interacting other children. Facial expressions add more details of emotion.

Maggy expresses her sadness and her temper, portraying herself as a *Sad Cat*, disappointed at not having a lunch date with her teacher. In her highly emotional state, her marks return to highly kinesthetic circular movements and her body schema returns to an earlier rigid form typical of her September drawings. This is emotion. Observe how different this drawing is from her interpretation of the cockateel.

Michael's illustrations from his book, *Crazy Vacation* and Julie's illustrations from her book, *Florida Vacation*, exemplify the care and engagement of sustained concentration and motivation. Both of these books involved many drafts of both illustrations and words. These are detailed memory drawings of vivid experiences exhibiting an abundance of detail, a sense of proportional and scale relationships, spatial-environmental relationships, elaboration, and movement. Both display a unique set of imagery combining remembered details and departing from schematic interpretation. Michael further incorporates vivid pencil strokes and marks completely filling his illustrations with color. Kerri's *Alein In hightop Shoes* is one illustration from her book *A Really Cool Alien* inspired by Terry's mixing of alien green color. This drawing portrays Kerri's ability to utilize unusual viewpoints for intentional impact and expression.

Rain

These illustrated poems offer another example of a different use of image-making. These poems were written in the springtime—early April—and represent final decisions regarding writing revisions and earlier drawings. Some of the earlier drafts documented here demonstrate changes in image and arrangement to better coordinate the balance of word and image as an aesthetic whole. Raindrops are schematically interpreted yet have sensory vividness due to their size and abundance. David's illustration provides an excellent example of a turning point. His self-schema is still quite general although conveying rudimentary body parts. Yet he indicates more of an horizon line than a base line, and incorporates overlapping. He explained that he had made the raindrops bigger at the bottom because they were nearer to the ground. One month and a half later he was drawing wasp world and ant colonies in precise detail. I chose to document these illustrated poems as examples of highly sensitive uses of figurative language in combination with richly decorative use of image and aesthetic planning of images. They further provide a comparison of sensory memories and direct observation as sources of inspiration.

I have been overwhelmed with the children's artistic growth and development. I had expected to changes in developmental progression due to the amount of time the children were given to practice art-making and the validation and confirmation they were receiving for their highly personalized images. Observing the children's artworks in relation to the combination of identified development stages of artistic growth and development, Lowenfeld's evaluation criteria and questions, my past experiences as an art educator, my ongoing experiences observing first graders in art classes across the state, lead me to conclude that the artworks of these children manifested by the end of the year combined characteristics and qualities of art-making traditionally expected of children in third and even fourth grades. Returning to Lowenfeld's holistic evaluation criteria, their two dimensional imagery manifested a great deal of growth in all of these areas. Of especial concern relative to compassionate community was the children's development in terms of self-awareness, relational awareness, empathy, engagement, perceptual awareness, and the re-presenting of their inner reflections and understandings of experience.

Most of these children had begun the year in the late scribbling, pre-schematic stage. I believe that the extent of their growth and development across such a diversity of children during this one year span of time, highlights the need for us to re-consider the ramifications of our educational policy of marginalizing

the arts and of gravely underestimating the artistic and creative capabilities of all our children.

Additionally, we need to begin research studying variations of artistic growth and development based upon emerging integrative programming that includes a drastic change in traditional practice opportunities and actualized valuing of the language of the visual arts. Most importantly, we must also critically address the subtle hegemonies we inadvertently subject our students to regarding their potential capabilities, in the ways we value children's art-making, and support or subvert their highly individualized and personal art-making.

The Development of Caring and Empathetic Relations

The Children: Capabilities of Care And Empathy

I return to Noddings (1992) as I try to ascertain whether we achieved our vision of a compassionate community and meeting ground.

If we make centers of care the focus of universal education, how will we evaluate our efforts? The answer has to be that we should look for the positive signs that we see in healthy family life: happy, healthy children; cooperative and considerate behavior; competence in the ordinary affairs of life; intellectual curiosity; openness and willingness to share; a confessed interest in existential questions; and a growing capacity to thrive in intimate relationships (Noddings 1992, p. 109).

I return to her descriptions of the attributes and manifestations of Care and her Centers of Care for Self and Others while identifying some of the behaviors and capabilities observed in our children by myself, Wendy, and the individuals whom I interviewed. Care can be considered as our most fundamental capability to enter into a highly empathetic relationship with another. Care projects us into another's reality, so much so that we can feel the world as if we were that other. Care is the wellspring of love and relation.

This is the fundamental aspect of caring from the inside. When I look at and think about how I am when I care, I realize that there is invariably This displacement of interest from my own reality to the reality of the other... To be touched, to have aroused in me something that will disturb my own ethical reality, I must see in the other's reality as a possibility for my own. This is not to say that I cannot try to see the reality differently. indeed I can... when we see the other's reality as a possibility for us, we must act to eliminate the intolerable, to reduce the pain, to fill the need, to actualize the dream. When I am in this sort of relationship with another, when the other's reality becomes a possibility for me, I care (Noddings 1984, p. 14).

Our children *did* develop these capabilities of shared feelings and projection into each other's feelings and experiences. As they became more and more sensitive and aware of their own feelings and experiences, so, too, their awareness and sensitivity to one another. They were deeply concerned for each other's well-

being—physically and emotionally. They became caregivers to one another whenever they observed hurt feelings, anxiety, upsettleness, or physical discomfort.

What additional characteristics and capabilities of care were we seeking? Let us return to the consideration of Self-Care and Care for Others. Self-care is manifested by a sense of self-understanding and the development of self-confidence and pride. This is accompanied by a sense of wellness and grace—of capability and individuality. Self-care further extends one’s capability to care for others. What attributes developed in our children that could be observed under a range of learning situations?

- *Self-confidence
- * Awareness and appreciation of individuality
- * Artistic grace
- * Pride of accomplishment

Care for others (Intimate and Distant) is manifested through relationships of caring and reciprocity of care; receiving care and giving care—finding confirmational relationships, connections, and friendships that give mutual acceptance and support. Care for others includes the building of relationships of trust, respect, and empathy. Care for others diminishes exclusivity and separation by developing understandings and knowledge of others and their viewpoints. Such care engages us in polyphonous dialogue with each other while developing reciprocal relationships of empathy. Our children engaged in all of these relationships and behaviors as manifested by their being able to develop:

- * Empathy relationships and attending to one another’s well-being.
- * Support for each others’ individuality and respect of diverse viewpoints.
- * Mutual acts of kindness and concern towards others.
- * Engagement in respectful dialogue and discussion with many points of view.
- * Mutual trust and shared responsibilities.
- * A sense of Belonging.

Although I list these attributes as characteristic of the children and their relationships with one another, I do not imply that they were “angels”, that they did not have their moments of temper, being upset, insecurity, lack of confidence, confrontation, needs for time-outs, or frustration. However, these moments were inconsistently peppered and coincided with personal-emotional issues being confronted at home rather than

the classroom (for example: parental conflict, moving, loss of friends, illness of family members, loss of pets, experiences of fright and insecurity, etc.). I believe that our children developed a strong sense of mutual respect, trust, care, and compassion for one another as our year together progressed. There was a distinctive lack of aggressive competition that was replaced by a shared sense of collaborative striving towards doing one's personal best and caring for one another's various accomplishments, needs, capabilities, and interests. Dependence became independence and collaboration.

True cooperation or collaboration is much more than working peacefully, sharing, and helping within a group. Collaboration involves the recognition, support, and utilization of the talents of all group members. For a child to feel successful, it is essential it is essential that his/her talents are not only identified, but allowed to flourish in a productive setting. (Oellers 1997, p.12).

I believe that the "positive signs" articulated by Noddings developed throughout the year and were enabled to flourish. Perhaps one of the biggest impacts upon an individual entering the classroom studio was the overwhelming sense of energy, enthusiasm, and joy: joy of the children as learners and artists, and joy of the teacher as learner and artist.

The occurrence of joy is a manifestation of receptive consciousness – A sign that we live in a world of relation as well as in one of instrumentality. That joy is sometimes an emotion—a nonreflective, direct contact with some object—is not denied. As emotion it is delightful, But joy is often different from the basic emotions. As basic affect, it accompanies our recognition of relatedness and reflects our basic reality. Its occurrence and recurrence maintain us in caring and, thus, contribute to the enhancement of the ethical ideal (Noddings 1983, p. 147).

The opportunity to work harmoniously together sharing creative and expressive ideas and feelings, to cooperate, and to collaborate enhanced the children's self-understandings and mutual understandings. The use of multimodal symbol systems enhanced the possibilities of expression, communication, and empathetic understandings of self, other, and world. These growing awarenesses helped the children to be able to "[treasure] the uniqueness of a whole range of perspectives without losing sight of commonalities" (Martin 1993, p. 56) thus they became "united by their shared knowledge of one another while cherishing each person's individuality" (Martin 1993, p. 181). This cherishing of each other's individuality was an integral component of our journey of relationship and connected knowing.

...Noddings sees all thinking and feeling in relation to the viewpoints and interests of others. When students understand the interdependence between self and other, when they develop the ability and volition to reason empathetically within diverse points of view, they will begin to see

the truth in the assertion that knowledge comes only through community, and they will begin the process of connected knowing (Stout 1999, pp. 24, 33).

The inner self of each child was safe, respected, welcomed, and attended. Compassion and empathy (receptive and projected) permeated the atmosphere as did our centers of care.

Interviews and Additional Perspectives

Since my own observations provided only one point of view concerning the classroom culture, my ongoing discussions with Wendy provided additional insight, corroboration, contradiction, and opened the door to more questioning. However, I wanted more perspectives. I wanted the perspectives of others who were not directly involved with my work, yet who were involved consistently with the children. Such individuals could provide important corroborations or contradictions based upon differing contexts of experience with the children. I interviewed Principal Tocci twice during the school year: in February and in June. At the end of the year I also interviewed three parents and the teachers of art education, physical education, and math enrichment. I began with an open question, asking each to describe their observations of the children's growth and development and their observations of the characteristics of the class as a whole.

My interviews with Principal Tocci served to identify his fundamental educational priorities for the children at Gilford Elementary School as being based upon his valuing of each individual student and "taking the time to listen to what children have to share. We value our students, who they are and what they are. We value what they believe and what they think." Principal Tocci described his belief that teachers foster community in their classrooms by helping children to be able to share experiences that enable one another. He emphasized the relationship between such sharing and the development of mutual trust, respect, and responsibility, characteristics he identifies as good citizenship. He further referred to John Dewey's philosophy of replicating society within the school rather than creating an institutionalized environment. This means, according to Principal Tocci, the blending of academics with the art, the practice of democracy, and the empowering of children and staff. He observed how the arts are often at the edge of school, and even formerly at Gilford Elementary, although valued, "the arts have been too much in isolation, and the arts faculty." Hence his vision of integrating the arts throughout the curriculum. Yet he believes that this can not be accomplished through the arm-twisting of teachers, but through ownership and

experience. His most fundamental educational goals and priorities for children are for the children to be “comfortable with themselves, to help give them belief in themselves, to help children feel successful whatever they do, to give them praise, to value their feelings and help nurture their talents and gifts. If they’re not feeling successful at this level, they won’t feel successful later on.” These are the values he brought into our classroom whenever he observed and interacted with us. His descriptions of the class community included

Tremendous! I have learned a great deal from visiting this class. ..I have an immediate impression of energy. It's so alive! There's so much to see, to take in. You have a deep sense of what's happening just by looking around—at the walls, the ceiling, the children...So much community! There are multiple possibilities open to the student... There is the practice of problem-solving and using the arts as a vehicle to help kids learn and to sensitize kids to the real world...even bringing them out into the real world to touch tress and grass, to develop their senses...They're excited about learning!

I formally asked Wendy to present her observations of the class culture and community in the form of a taped interview for the purposes of future documentation. Wendy vividly described the growth and development of the children relative to her concerns of community and the impact of the visual arts and engaged art-making.

...I am amazed at their growth in both the sense of community and themselves and [their] sense of independence...the immersion of the children in the artistic process has totally transformed my thoughts about the arts—visual literacy—because I never felt that I, I shied away from using the arts because I wasn’t an art student.....So my whole paradigm of references of where art fit in has been dramatically changed. And also observing the benefits and this is where the community piece comes in. I see the arts, the art we have done with the children as a vehicle....there’s been so many benefits that will transform the way I begin my school year and my curriculum and my room because what I saw was children, through the exploration of the arts and exploration of art materials, develop a sense of their own voice, their own capabilities, develop a sense of learning about each other, of sharing each others’ ideas, of building an understanding of one another, and the willingness to share, and the willingness to risk take...it took off the restrictions of this is the correct way to do something, this is the incorrect which so many times binds kids and makes them fearful, and it freed them up to express themselves and feel safe which helped to establish the community place which is a place where everyone feels safe and valued. Through the use of art, the children developed a very strong sense of each other and themselves and that this room was a safe place and they could risk take with their ideas. And their ideas would take form in their art products and also the process....even the conversations which went on while the children were exploring and the ideas which flowed back and forth, the process of looking up into someone else’s drawing and stopping to say, “Hey, that’s really neat the way you did that!” builds community...the building upon each other, the sharing of ideas, it opened up this whole new spectrum of what being a community meant....
(Oellers, Interview Jan. 17, 1999).

The parents whom I interviewed had all been involved with the school, had been involved with this class and had helped with many different classes. I chose the teachers of art education, of health and

physical education, and the first-grade science and math enrichment teacher because they also had the opportunity of working with this class and a wide variety of other classes within the whole school. The following summations and quotations have been selected from their interviews as representing their points of view and points of emphasis. I have included a brief description of each individual in order to provide a frame of reference and sense of context regarding their perspectives.

Kim Garvin, the art educator, has been teaching since 1979 and describes teaching as part of her life. Her personal goals as an educator include the development of children's confidence, their enjoyment of life and learning, and to realize that they "are the creators of their life." She described the general characteristics of first graders as being timid, apprehensive, wide-eyed, loveable, and young. I asked her to share her thoughts concerning the attributes and characteristics of Wendy's class—not comparing them to anyone else—just describing their qualities as she perceived them. She replied:

...excited, very excited, fun, I didn't have to tell them how to do a lot of real basic things, they came in with seeds...just their vocabulary alone—so much broader—they took things a little bit further—they weren't afraid—they were expressive, an expressive group...happy, excited, expressive kids...they became more supportive of each other's individuality. They weren't a class that picked on one another—they were given support to be what they were and speak for themselves and do what they wanted to do. Therefore they were very supportive of each other—they liked each other, that was really nice—no leaders of the pack...always wanted to do more, to add to ideas...they have a lot of empathy for one another—like to help working cooperatively definitely helping one another, being independent and willing to take risks definitely—being able to express themselves constructively—understanding other people's point of view and feelings—going from typical first grade whining, turning it into real needs, real concern, and being able to express them...comes from finding more ways to express themselves and that's okay—personalities gone forward—giving each other a chance to speak their piece and listening to how it affected other people...(Garvin, Interview June 1999).

Melancy White is the health and physical education teacher. She has been teaching at Gilford elementary for fourteen years. She described her educational goals for children as emanating from her teaching experience and fundamental belief in children's needs to develop life skills concerning their personal wellness. She emphasized her goal of exploring many different kinds of activities with children as an alternative to TV and to enhance their capability of play. As part of personal wellness, Melancy identifies self-confidence, self-awareness, body awareness and an "I can" attitude, echoing many aspects of Noddings' concept of self-care. Describing the personality of Wendy's class and their special attributes she replied:

...Unique. They are all unique little people. They're very supportive—they're a real fine community. If someone would get hurt you'd have twenty million little mothers and fathers that are over there and asking are you okay? There's a lot of community and a lot of support (White, Interview, June 1999).

Michelle Martinelli was the science and math enrichment teacher for the first grade. She is now teaching third grade at Gilford Elementary School. This was her second year at Gilford. Her personal educational goals for children include the development of independent learning skills—questioning skills and the seeking out of resources, and the development of the children's abilities to communicate and share information with one another. She describes first graders as generally being shy, not wanting to be wrong, being very dependent, and looking at their teacher as the center of everything. Regarding Wendy's first graders,

...now they are much more independent, they know routines, much more willing to take risks and to try new things, more comfortable with each other...much more self-confidence and each one is confident at different levels—each one found a niche where they belong...very energetic! Each child working at their own level at their own pace...very energetic, very outgoing, very independent...each kid in here stands out—each has the opportunity to excel in some way and they all recognize that...to see their writing, to see their verbal skills, to see their drawings, to see their problem-solving, and the way they've all grown together...very supportive of each other, even out at recess if something happens with one of them there's always four or five kids right away from their classroom...they compliment and support [each other] ...very creative, creative thinkers, they look at things from a variety of ways, they're very expressive and they're very confident. They love to think and I love the depth of what we can do. They like learning things and they love to think on their own and they have the skills to think on their own, So whatever science lesson I was doing...it had to be one step more...always one more question...or that they loved to learn so that when they asked questions they had the skills to say where can we find the answers, and how do we know that? (Martinelli, Interview, May 1999)

Mrs. Atwater is a mother who volunteers a great deal of time at school. She has three little girls and one boy, all at Gilford elementary. At this time, her son was in Wendy's class, and her three daughters ranged from kindergarten through fifth grade. One aspect of my interview with her addressed her perception of the class dynamics and the class as a community in terms of care and respect.

...they have a lot of both [care and respect] for everyone involved. They all work together well. When you see it most is on a field trip, when you're away, not just in the classroom but everywhere they go. They have their friends, but everyone is part of the group and they have respect for everyone in that group...All have their [individual] strengths and weaknesses...Sharing and helping..[they]do a great job, get a lot of work accomplished working together (Atwater, Interview, June 1999).

All of these observants emphasized a range of interrelated qualities and attributes that indicate the development of a compassionate community and address the strands from which it may be composed.

Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness

*** Awareness and Sensitivity to One Another**

- * Sharing ideas and Listening attentively to one another with interest in the ideas of others**
- * Engaging in Respectful discussions with many points of view**
- * Depth of Thinking, Questioning, and Problem-solving**
- * Cooperation and Helping**
- * Support for one another's Individuality**
- * Mutual Respect and Belonging**
- * Empathy and Sensitivity to each other's Needs and Feelings**
- * Concern for each other's Well-being**
- * Being able to Express Inner Feelings and Ideas with one another**
- * Happiness and Excitement for Learning**
- * Strong Sense of Community**

Wendy specifically emphasized how the visual arts had enhanced the growth of community as manifested by the children's growing sense of individuality and independence (in contrast to dependence), the children's sense of capability, and their sense of self and one another. These qualities reflect the ongoing development of self-care and care for others as described by Noddings (1983). Wendy further states that the children have learned about one another, have gained a sense of themselves and each other, and have built understandings of one another. She identified the ability to share ideas and to enter into conversation and dialogue with one another. Kim emphasized their excitement—their sense of wonderment—and support for one another's individuality. The children could speak for themselves yet could understand different points of view, different feelings, and listen to each other. She explicitly described helping attitudes and cooperation rather than competitiveness and fault finding. Empathy is indicated as she describes the children's sensitivity to each other's needs, feelings, and their awareness of others. They were described as kind and helping. Again, attributes of care for self and care for others emerge with a high degree of empathetic relationship. Melancy also emphasizes the children's mutually support for one another and their attentiveness to each other's needs—their readiness to give care and have concern for each other's well-being. She corroborates Mrs. Nelson's account of how the children became

concerned for another child during recess and took steps to care for her (chapter 5). Mrs. Atwater identifies care as respect and the belonging of all. The children have developed respect for each others' individual strengths rather than anyone's strength. They share, help, and collaborate not only in school but beyond! Michelle confirms these observations concerning self-confidence, mutual support, independence, and mutual appreciation. She adds the dimension of risk-taking and creative problem-solving, echoing Kim's remarks on the children's capabilities of fluency and elaboration of ideas. Michelle remarks upon the depth of their thinking and questioning. All of the observants describe helping, mutual support, concern for each other's well-being, self-confidence, and respectful awareness of each other as individuals.

A Constellation of Influences, Impacts, and Questions

The development of our compassionate community required more than simply bringing the visual arts into the curriculum. There was a larger constellation of interwoven factors that emerged as key design threads and patterns in our tapestry that had significant impact upon our learners. I do not perceive them as hierarchical but as interrelated elements and impacts that enhanced one another and helped us grow together. Each contributed to our tapestry of community and became part of one another.

Multilingual Dialogue and Engagement

Dialogic discussion throughout all phases of learning and areas of learning was essential. Such dialogic discussion could be intrapersonal reflections or interpersonal multivoiced discussion between children, and/or between an individual child and teacher, or between small to whole groups of children and teacher. This dialogue provided opportunities to articulate understandings, pose existential questions, and examine learning while adding the dimension of feelings, concerns, ideas, and highly personal stories. Inquiry and hypothesizing "What if's" permeated these conversations constantly opening possibilities of perspective, the seeking of different answers, and engaging imagination (Greene 1988). We listened and discussed, giving ourselves and each other our attention and care.

We have been talking about dialogue—about talking and listening, sharing
And responding to each other. It is vital in every aspect of education. In teaching subject
matter, the teacher must learn to listen as well as to talk...
The purpose of dialogue is to come into contact with ideas and to understand, to meet the
other and to care (Noddings 1983, p. 186).

We discovered multiple viewpoints, differences and commonalities. We brainstormed, problem-solved, interpreted, and inspired one another as we shared experiences, memories, ideas, and feelings. Our discussion and our stories helped to weave our community together. Our shared experiences began creating our own collaborative community story in which we were all valued and cared-for participants and contributors.

Multiple mediational tools were valued as diverse forms of expression and communication. The visual arts became a common language with which all the children became extremely eloquent (in their highly personalized ways) and confident. This particular language was accessible to all the children and was often used as a form of pre-thinking for verbal and written speech. Visual art provided a bridge to more abstract symbol systems that were less sensorily tangible. Building upon the familiar world of the senses made more connections and relationships possible as we continually expanded our allusionary base (Broudy 1987).

For years, psychologists have researched the development of language in children. Classroom pedagogy in American schools has probably been informed most by the work of Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner. However, I believe that is the Russian Psychologist, L.S. Vygotsky (1978) who most clearly understands the important role of drawing in the development of oral and written speech. Vygotsky, in fact, does not see drawing as separate from speech: he actually regards it as a particular kind of speech in and of itself...He considers the gesture to be the initial visual sign that contains the child's future writing (Olson 1992, p. 134).

Looking closely and observing attentively, we gazed upon our world with multiple lenses, enhancing perceptual sensitivity. We gathered and interpreted our sensory impressions through daily art-making experiences that revolved around drawing and collaging with child-selected medias and materials. We valued the enhanced diversity of the children's responses, their ideas, their feelings, and their expressions of understanding. With many languages surrounding us, the children could choose expressive forms based upon personal preferences, learning needs, and expressive-communicative intentionality. The use of multiple languages provided diverse opportunities for all students to engage and to enhance their conceptual understandings and critical skills sensitive to their own preferred learning style. The visual arts further offered sensorily based metaphorical symbol systems with which to transform experience into meaningful understandings and utterances. Through such utterances we enter into one another's world, crossing the boundaries of our experiences and entering into the stories of others. The children each had

multiple opportunities and means for personalized expression, communication, discussion, and sharing. All could contribute and participate

Conceptual Transfer and Self-Confidence

Discipline boundaries also blurred as thematically based units of study wove conceptual understandings together and became part of one another. Balance is an essential concept in physics, math problems, mobile making, constructing towers, writing poetry, playing baseball, dancing, reading stories, collaging designs, etc. When we studied balance, within an interdisciplinary integrated arts framework, each child had multiple pathways for developing their understanding of balance. They could then apply and act upon their knowledge in varying situations with diverse forms of expression. These conceptual interrelationships and transfers provided extended opportunities for application and experimentation. This in turn, enhanced understandings, relevancy, interest, and motivation. Due to the diversity of the children's ideas and capabilities, the offering of multiple languages in conjunction with the interdisciplinary thematic framework offered many opportunities for the children to collaborate with one another across literacies and traditional disciplines. Self-confidence continued to be enhanced as were interpersonal relationships and peer learning/teaching experiences.

Participation and Confirmation for All Learners

Children with diverse learning styles, diverse needs, and diverse capabilities could each find wonderment in learning and believe in themselves as learners due to the choices of language forms with which to explore, apply and demonstrate understandings. Additionally, students who were extremely challenged and who would struggle continuously with reading and/or writing and/or arithmetic had many opportunities to learn and to express themselves through a variety of mediational tools/expressive forms. Our mutual observation was that for traditional language arts challenged children or for those who simply were developing at their own pace rather than the institutionally expected pace, visual art became a preferred mode of communication and expression. Instead of believing themselves to be less than learners and conceiving of learning as a form of drudgery and anguish, they emerged as self-confident and enthusiastic learners. No one was marginalized in terms of learning or belonging or contributing.

I believe that these observations highlight a profound question of how a multi-arts infused curriculum that offers multiple mediational tools can prevent not only marginalization but provide successful learning for these students? How would such opportunities provide a means of challenging traditional biases, misassumptions, and teaching practices held by specialists in the areas of language arts, mathematics and science, and special education? Again, how have we severely underestimated the capabilities of our children? How many of our children fall through the cracks because of their differences and our inability to address their needs, capacities, and interests?

...It is a well documented fact that 15 per cent or more of all children do not respond well to verbal instruction (Taylor, 1979, 214), and many more children have varying degrees of difficulty with it. ...If white represents visual learners and black represents verbal learners, it is easy to see how many shades of gray are possible within the two extremes. The children who respond poorly to verbal instruction may very well be the children who simply cannot or will not pay attention, who will not lead or participate in class discussions, who seem unable or unwilling to follow directions, and who are very likely to be classified as being daydreamers, discipline problems, learning disabled, or all of the above...these children do indeed have a very real learning disability in the public-school context. They may be handicapped by finding themselves in a disabling environment, one that is too narrow to serve and enhance their visual aptitudes (Olson 1992, p. 7).

Multiple Kinds of Assessment: Diversity of Outcomes

Another key strand of our learning tapestry and environment was Wendy's approach to assessment strategies. As discussed in chapter seven, Wendy incorporated observational running records, portfolios, children's self and group assessment, and offered diverse forms of expression for the communication and demonstration of skills and understandings. The standard basal tests required by the school system were administered, but as part of a larger canvas of learning. Noddings (1984) eloquently discusses the dilemmas of traditional assessment practice relative to the values of care.

...some say that it is in the best interest of the student to be graded fairly according to openly established and uniformly applied standards. But this is mere glibness. What is a fair standard for student achievement? What is or should be measured to the standard? How? And how can such a standard be "uniformly applied?" Even if the processes (which are easy to talk about) could be effectively carried out, we would still experience conflict. We are asked to look at the student as object—as a thing to which some measuring stick can be applied. Even if we execute the procedures as carefully and fairly as we can, we must still explain our decisions to the cared-for. After considering all this, we must say, I have decided thus-and-so. This is demeaning and distracting. It violates the relationship...this is a dilemma that goes to the heart of teaching (Noddings 1983, pp. 194-5).

Wendy stated her belief that the children must be involved in the process of assessment. Her debriefing questions and discussions of "What went well?" and "What could have been done differently?" modeled

caring and constructive criticism. She observed throughout her past teaching, that when children were given opportunities to self-assess that this increased their sense of ownership and empowerment while providing goal setting for future efforts. Assessment was not an isolated snapshot but an ongoing cycle of learning and evaluation sensitive to the process of growth and development over time. Skills and understandings could constantly be revisited, developed further, and given time to develop according to the needs of individual children. The use of performance assessments involving portfolios of student work, written narratives, and conferences further provided a multi dimensional portrayal of children's abilities.

The gallery of children's work that surrounded us became an open demonstration of understandings and a source of constant observation, discussion, and reflection. The gallery affirmed and confirmed our learners concretely exemplifying the valuing of diverse solutions to problems and challenges, the diverse applications of concepts, and the multiple perspectives of interpretation. The visual arts offered an important choice of language with which the children could demonstrate and apply their understandings in a manner that confirmed their individuality and capability. If our aim is, as Noddings (1983) suggests, the eventual mastery of selected concepts and skills in order to be prepared for living, why do we so narrowly proscribe the means with which to develop these skills, standardize the time given for practice and application, and narrowly construct our tools of assessment? A new question takes form, how does assessment practice, enhance, or diminish community and values of care?

Language Arts

Language arts development was an area of significant impact and must be acknowledged although I was not specifically studying this particular area of growth and development during this research. At Gilford elementary, as in most elementary schools, there is a major instructional and curricular emphasis on language arts. Language arts development is traditionally a key determinant in defining learning success and intellectual growth (Gardner 1997 Conference Keynote address). This emphasis may create a great deal of stress, anxiety, and diminished self-confidence for language arts challenged children (no matter what reason they are experiencing this challenge). These learners too frequently and tragically become labeled as delayed learners and slow learners as early as their first grade of school. This labeling is frequently accompanied by emerging self-attitudes of defeat, less and less participation in class, and a sense of incompetence (Olson 1992)

We observed that picturing as part of the writing process (and our valuing of their picturing as equally important as the writing) eliminated a great deal of stress—not only for challenged children but for all the children. Furthermore, frustration was replaced by success and each story could be tangibly represented and shared with others. Picturing was a form of story-telling. The most important feature of storytelling for us, in terms of care, was the development of confidence with one's voice as a story experiencer, story creator, story teller, and story sharer. This voice was confirmed and affirmed through the picturing process, our discussions, our gallery, and our circle of sharing.

We also observed, as previously mentioned, that picturing became a favored means of pre-writing and a source for editing. Some students, by the end of the year, used visual story boards to pre-plan their writing stories. Later, as the writing developed and went through the editing and revision process, so, too, the initial picture. Both were revisited and elaborated for detail and quality. Patterns of picturing emerged: picturing before writing with the picture being fully developed, picturing before writing with a back and forth attention to picturing and writing, and picturing after writing as writing skills and facility with printing developed. Only two of our children, David and Brian emerged with this preference for writing followed by picturing. However, picturing did occur, for all the children, before writing revision. The picturing, we observed, provided richly sensory and detailed imagery, which inspired the use of vividly descriptive writing and which included the use of figurative language.

The greatest discovery we can make about language, as the noted philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975) reminds us, is not how we “use language,” but rather how language “uses us” (345–447). Language is not just an object or commodity for analysis and manipulation. It is rather the preeminent mediator of meaning; it mediates not only the meaning of the world, but also the meaning of ourselves. And because language, in its written form, is a very particular mediation in which the visual has been eliminated almost completely, Gadamer's theory helps us realize what our written language cannot give. Because of complete phonetization, it is true, as Saussure (1966) contended, that our written language provides a near perfect account of what can be said, But it accomplishes this at the expense of no longer providing us with a direct account of what is seen...few recognize the implications of this anomaly...(Olson 1992, pp. 144–5).

Writing and Picturing became interwoven. The children were author-artists/artist-authors. They were especially fascinated by the books of Eric Carle who exemplified to them the author-artist. Upon reflection, I would introduce more visual artists who were writers and writers who were visual artists in addition to sharing more books who were authored and illustrated by the same artist. Nonetheless, the children themselves assumed this dual artistry as they wrote and pictured, weaving their own combinations of word and image, or combinations of images alone.

Wendy engaged in the keeping of running records throughout the year for each child regarding their reading and writing development. She reviewed writing journals and portfolios with each child. We did have a range of developmental pacing. She was particularly worried by Maggy, David, Jesse, Jeff, and Stefan who, by mid-year, were not writing very much. They were picturing however. Interestingly, David, Jeff, Jesse, and Stefan remained in the late manipulative stage of artistic development. I do not wish to classify their imagery in any way but use this as a reference tool that describes the characteristics of their imagery and their approach to image development in order to be more sensitive to their needs. Their need was to explore the sensory and manipulative qualities of materials extensively! Their schema development was highly gestalt and generalized and their responses were saliently physiognomic.

During the spring, for example, we had a cage of cockateels in the classroom when we were studying birds. The children chose to draw these birds frequently—placing themselves right up close to the cage, observing the birds closely, and creating their bird interpretations [see samples of Mariah the Cockateel]. David was not ready for this kind of observation drawing and he became quite frustrated with himself and began exclaiming, “I can’t draw birds!” Such a statement often indicates the need to return to a more sensory-kinesthetic approach to re-presentation and interpretation. When asked the question, “What do you think it feels like to fly?” He spread his arms out and showed me flying. “Do you think you could show what it feels like to fly in your picture?” Easy! No problem! David immediately chose a black crayon and made sweeping wings across the paper and chose a blue crayon to add more undulating softer marks for the wind. In another month, his image-making leaped to complex symbols as did the images of Stefan, Jesse, and Jeff [see samples]. When they began image-making with complex schema, their writing also leapt forward. These leaps point to directions for future research as they imply a correlative influence between symbol development across visual and verbal modalities and point again to the developmental individuality of each learner.

By the end of the year, when Wendy implemented the basal Reading tests, all the children met the grade level scoring proficiencies and many achieved second- and third-grade instructional levels (see appendix). These scores were important to the school administration as validations for affirming that the children’s learning met and even exceeded grade level standards and expectations.) However, the stress on

this testing as an indication of proficiency is another whole arena of concern, which cannot be addressed here.

Wendy particularly described her children's writing as being inspired and infused with imagination, poetic use of language, and personal meaning. Most importantly, the children saw themselves as writer-artists and artist-writers, authoring and picturing stories, poems, books, research papers, letters, and practical notes. Above all, there was a sense of joy and enthusiasm for writing-picturing/picturing-writing. I will never forget the springtime morning when, following our circle discussion of wings and what if we had wings, Brian leapt up with his arm extended high. Trying to raise his hand and wait to be called on, his enthusiasm bubbled out, "Can we write now? Please? Please? Please?!"—and he was joined by a chorus of "Yes, yes, can we write now? Please?" No child was left out.

I believe that due to the opportunity to use art as mediational tool of choice and the promotion of multiple literacies helped to counterbalance the dominant school stress on reading and writing while providing each child with a means of mediating meaning between self and world that connected directly to their whole self. Seeing the world intimately rather and perhaps more vicariously, more empathetically than when mediated through highly abstract phonetic symbols. When we as adults become fluent and eloquent with such symbols do we not aspire to and turn to the poetic and figurative use of language to express our innermost self and find our meeting grounds of "I and Thou"? Do we not turn to the arts for inspiration, balm, healing, engagement, and vision?

Dissanayake (1992) reminds us that there are other non-Western cultures in which the arts are so finely woven into the very fabric of life there is no need for the name of artist.

Although "Art" as a concept seems to have been born of and Sustained by a commercial society is therefore only roughly two Centuries old, and hence is relative, even discardable, it should not be forgotten that *the arts* have always been with us. So have ideas of beauty, sublimity, and transcendence, along with the verities of the human condition; love, death, memory, suffering, loss, desire, reprieve, and hope. These have been the subject matter of and occasion for the arts throughout human history...art is not confined to a small coterie of geniuses, visionaries, cranks, and charlatans...but is a fundamental human species characteristic that demands and deserves to be promoted and nourished...art is a normal and necessary behavior of human beings that like talking, exercising, playing, working, socializing, learning, loving, and nurturing should be encouraged and developed in everyone (Dissanayake 1992, p. 26).

The children in this classroom were each celebrated as an artist. Each had the opportunity to contribute to the culture of the community and to enhance the community through their contribution. The children

became their own cultural agents. With their teacher, they constructed a culture where no one particular language system had value over the exclusion of others. Paley (1995) refers to the visual faculty as being able to restore lived historical memory and subjectivity as components of meaning. Wendy and the children engaged in the making of their own lived history and shared memory. How did their emerging culture, their emerging compassionate community, influence or impact the community right outside the door?

The School Community: Responses and Impact

Family Support

Our re-conceptualization of the classroom as a studio-gallery was accompanied by an open invitation to the larger school community to come and visit, to join us if possible, and at the very least, to enjoy beholding the children's artworks and their learning, which was everywhere. The children's work was displayed on all the walls, on the doors, was stapled from the ceiling, was suspended from the ceiling supports, and permeated both sides of the hallway that passed Wendy's room. We probably violated many fire codes and caused our custodians a great deal of worry, but we decided to go forward until someone would tell us no more. No one did. To the contrary, we were supported by the administration in our efforts to keep expanding our gallery. Any one who walked down the hallway was temporarily surrounded by the children's gallery and had the opportunity to pause, give attention, ask questions, and come inside.

Parents and caregivers did come and visit us. Wendy had three consistent parent volunteers coming in every week. Other parents chose parent conferences during the day or came to visit in order to "see and experience" this integrated classroom—usually under the guise of dropping things off or picking things up. Other parent volunteers in the school frequently dropped in to visit and attend. Wendy used these opportunities to spend time with family members and deeply explain the foundation of our teaching philosophy to them while sharing the growth of the children with enthusiasm and pride. Wendy observed that most parents and volunteers commented to her on how disorganized the class seemed at first, but as they paid attention, they could see the concentration and involvement of the children working whether independently or collaboratively. Visiting provided the opportunity of watching the children being engaged and interacting with their growing. Since their learning was also displayed on every possible square inch of wall space, one only had to read the images and the writing before their eyes with attention and guidance in order to observe the children's growth.

I observed that whenever a parent came into the class, Wendy welcomed them warmly, gave her deep attention to them as she spoke, and always spoke of their child with care and pride—sharing some accomplishment and special capability that had been manifested that day. Gilford is a school with, as Principal Tocci explained to me, an outstanding level of parent support and involvement. I can not say that our particular model enhanced or diminished this existing support in any way. I can only remark on the open invitation of welcome and the willingness of Wendy to reach out to the children's various families. I do believe that our valuing of the children's art-making and our dialogue with involved family members concerning the visual arts as a valued language for learning and means of demonstrating learning, did at least catalyze reflection and promoted an open-mindedness towards consideration of the arts as valuable languages.

Teachers

Teachers from the first-grade team kept up much more of a distance and did not often come to visit except to exchange professional messages quickly. The teacher who shared a convertible classroom wall with Wendy did come sometimes after school to visit—but more as a social visit with Wendy rather than a visit of pedagogical interest. The teachers did not seem to want to know what dynamic kinds of learning were occurring but wanted to confirm that Wendy's classroom space was disorganized and that real learning was set aside. Wendy was perceived, at that time, as a threat to the status quo, and as being given preferential treatment by the principal. I was asked if Wendy really taught reading. I was jealously asked why I could not come and teach their students, too. I tried to frame my answers in the context of my doctoral studies that would lead to future opportunities of collaboration. I emphasized that this year was exploratory and that I welcomed their input. Wendy and I kept a standing invitation open for anyone to visit the classroom or to join us in discussion after school. These inter-colleague tensions need to be identified, understood as much as possible, and addressed in order to try and sustain care relationships throughout the community of school. Care needs to permeate all our actions and endeavors.

Recognizing this aspect of the emotional impact of our work, and trying to see our relationship through the eyes of others, helped us to move in the direction of working with rather than working against. Wendy was an agent of change sending ripples wherever she went. Some perceived these ripples as threatening, some perceived them as being only for people like Wendy, some sent their own exciting

ripples out, and some sent ripples out with the intention of meeting! Wendy received offers of collaborative work from one of her fifth-grade colleagues and another third-grade colleague. The reading specialists began working with the children inside the classroom rather than pulling the children out, and the new art educator became an avid supporter. Ultimately, a positive relationship developed across the first-grade team due to our constant diplomacy and the direct observations of the children as dynamic learners and as a group who had a very strong sense of community. No one was being asked to teach like Wendy although support was available for those interested in pursuing pedagogical change.

The team meetings that I attended and that Wendy discussed with me could be best described as forced time together. A forty-five minute block of time once a week had been designated for obligatory team meetings. Discussion at the meetings centered upon curricular and testing paper work, forms, and administrative chores. Meetings were not a time for the teachers to engage dialogically with one another nor to share their concerns for children, their learning successes, innovative ideas, challenges, or discoveries. Meetings were not environments that nurtured care and relationship—instead they seemed to foster distance, superficial complaining, and busywork.

When and how could teachers deeply engage with one another and find I-Thou meeting grounds? If arts engagements can enhance the development of caring communities with children, how could we apply this knowledge to the development of caring relationships and communities for teachers? Here is an arena of future research and of present concern. As Grumet (1993) emphasizes, we need to provide teachers with reflective times and spaces, opportunities for critical, reflective, and passionate discussion if we are asking them to engage in the art of teaching. We also need time to develop caring meeting grounds for teachers in addition to the families and children in our schools. Critical discussion without care can become a bitter wasteland of defenses where I-thou meetings withdraw and wither.

Wendy told me many times how much she cherished our deeply passionate and philosophical discussions, our shared brainstorming, and our shared care for the children. An ongoing challenge, is to cultivate bridgework and boundary crossing among colleagues and to prevent distancing, distrust, the assumed need for self-defensiveness, and marginalization. Can we become philosophical co-inquirers and meaning makers and co-teachers? Can we say to ourselves and one another,

I teach for that moment when a student believes in himself. I teach

For the teacher's meeting when we discover how much we have in common. I teach for the chance to speak honestly and to listen openly while others do the same. I teach to become vulnerable, to be questioned and to question, to feel the sense of danger that comes when molding futures. I teach because teaching is the job that demands the most courage. I have the courage to teach (S. Bendau, Educational Leadership, Portfolio, Dec. 1998, p. 96).

Here is another area of community where the arts may be most valuable: helping teachers to create a mutual meeting ground of empathy and care where we can be vulnerable and where we can let our inner selves speak out, question, and listen to one another as teachers, learners, artists, and practitioners of care.

Administration

Principal Tocci carefully watched our growth and development throughout the year and frequently came unexpectedly into the classroom. He would join circle discussions or would actively engage the children in discussion of their learning and their various projects. The children looked forward to his visits and would even ask if they could invite Principal Tocci to see their work. He represented a highly respected authority figure and highly respected judgement—yet tempered with care-giving. During one of my interviews of principal Tocci, he answered my question concerning what he valued as the most important component of first-grade learning. He replied that his most fundamental concern was the children's sense of confidence and self-esteem, for them to be able to shrug off their shoulders, all the baggage they came into school with. He is also concerned with the maintaining and exceeding of standards, curriculum frameworks, and using the arts as a vehicle for enhancing and enriching learning in all areas. Vice Principal Sandra MacGarragle also was a frequent participatory visitor. We were being carefully observed while being supported. Since Gilford Elementary is a H.O.T. school, many school districts send visitors to Gilford. Principal Tocci invited Wendy and myself to make small presentations to these groups of visitors concerning full integration of the arts in the grade level classroom. Wendy became a principle presenter and participatory advocate for integration of the arts and was further asked to represent the teaching faculty of Gilford in a televised panel discussion broadcast focusing on arts integration and higher order thinking.

As the year progressed Principal Tocci followed our journey of growth and development with the children. By early spring, he was so impressed with the growth and development of the children and the scope of learning impacts that had already emerged due to our daily visual arts engagements and development of compassionate community that he asked us if we would be interested in designing a formal

instructional model based upon our work together. Once developed, he would have us present the model to the Superintendent and the School Board for acceptance as the model for *a pilot program with a pilot team of teachers to begin implementation* September of 1998. We accepted. We felt that our challenge was to develop a model that wove together curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school goals rather than treating them as isolated parts of a larger whole. We had an ecological tapestry in mind not a fragmented machine. We also had a meeting ground in mind and a vision of a caring and compassionate community infused with the arts. The model had to be as integrated as our vision.

The Integrated Instructional Model and Implications

We worked all spring developing and refining what came to be our Integrated Instructional Model. [see sample] During this period of development, we met three times with Principal Tocci for diplomatic critical and editorial discussion. We developed a symbolic diagram of three intersecting circles with the learner at the very center. Each circle on the first level represented dialogic instruction, interdisciplinary thematic curriculum, and multiple assessments. The overlapping represented interrelatedness and unity. We then developed a second layer of three intersecting circles that addressed our goals, goals for students, for faculty, and for outreach. Again, the learner was at the center and we were all learners.

A third layer was developed that identified the core components of our model—our strands: the compassionate community, engagement and dialogue, and integrating the arts as multimediation tools. This layer became a focus of diplomatic critical discussion. “Compassionate Community” was just too soft, too sentimentally loaded! I also believe, too spiritually ephemeral could be added. We decided to compromise by changing nomenclature for the sake of implementing our vision on a wider scale. We would address the components of compassionate community without labeling them as such. I trusted in the process of implementation, modeling, and practice and the emphasis that this “model” was exploratory and would need ongoing change, evolution, and revision. I believed that once in practice, we could return to an explicit acknowledgement of our fundamental relational ethic of care.

Our circles became Community and Democratic Process, Higher Order Thinking and Problem-based Learning, and Integrated Arts—dramatically watered down, yet quite palatable for the Superintendent and the School Board. Our primary concern was enablement of practice. Within each of these circles we developed a list of attributes in the form of teacher goals-*the teacher will be able*

to...mirroring our vision of enabling all learners and re-addressing our original strands. The fourth layer, addressed our goals for the teacher and the consideration of pedagogical and epistemological changes and transitions needing support and facilitation for the implementation of the model—for the actualized practice of the model by diverse teachers across diverse class communities and grade levels.

After much discussion, editing, and revising, we finally had a model that we believed represented our values, facilitated the ongoing development of our educational vision, supported the S.A.U. goals, and was framed in diplomatic language acceptable to all parties. Principal Tocci presented this model to the School Board during the spring of 1998. They unanimously accepted the model and provided funding for the development of a pilot team of teachers. Funding provided for professional development funds to be used for the development of Interdisciplinary Integrated Arts curriculum units, supplies and resources for visual arts learning centers, and consultation for portfolio development and the practice of visual art engagements. The implementation, ongoing assessment, and refinement of this model is my current research as is my ongoing work with the Gilford teachers and the children from our first-grade class. During the year of 1998–1999, four teachers, including Wendy, worked from this model representing first, second, and third grades. During the current school year of 1999–2000, nine teachers are working from this model representing the first through fourth grades. Principal Tocci's vision is to have all his teachers eventually being able to work with this model and to continue to revise the model and provide professional development support.

We were able to identify a core common need of all the teachers involved: to fully experience engaged visual art-making and rediscover their own inner creative spirit and artistry. Without such experience, the teachers, other than Wendy, gave theoretical support of daily visual arts integration, but primarily practiced second-hand art as an add-on integrated activity. Principal Tocci hired an arts enrichment teacher to work with the members of the team and the additional first-grade teachers. She provided a great deal of modeling and dialogue with the team, enhanced understandings of arts possibilities, and offered a great deal of insightful support.

I was able to initiate a team of volunteer art education students from Plymouth State College to work with the Gilford teachers once a week during the spring semester. They would represent a pilot program of involvement for my university art education students to offer guidance, modeling, and support

for the visual arts engagements with each teacher. I did visit Gilford as frequently as possible in order to maintain my relationship with Wendy's children (at that time looping with her in second grade), and to provide support for the teachers. The teacher and student feedback regarding this pilot program indicated that it was highly successful for all parties. The teachers felt that their needs had been listened to and the students did provide supportive modeling. The students were able to enhance their understanding of children, pedagogy, and educational possibility. The children were given more opportunities to use the visual arts as a language of meaning and encounter. All of these supports were essential for the teachers as a form of modeling arts engagements and dialogue. However, these supports were not a replacement for direct encounter. Based upon the reflective evaluations of the teachers concerning their needs, they still identified the need to know more about the visual arts because, they were not artistic!!!

Through discussion with the teachers and Principal Tocci, I was able to design and implement a three day Visual Arts Engagement Institute this past summer. We engaged in multivoiced and multilingual dialogic encounters as we reawakened our artist within, discovering the wonder of the language of the visual arts and the wonder of becoming a compassionate community where I and Thou met and cared for one another. This institute was the embodiment of the compassionate community and the practice of engaged art-making. Twenty individuals attended: the vice principal, two parent volunteers, the new art educator, the two music educators, and fifteen grade level teachers! One of the music educators confided with me that engagement and multivoiced dialogue had opened his eyes to a whole new approach to teaching music and the consideration of integrative opportunities that began with engagement and community. Teacher evaluations from the Institute included the following:

"I gained insight about myself and about how others see and sense the world around them. I gained a better understanding of just how students/children express themselves freely in a secure environment and how I can help my students feel that same freedom I felt through the Institute I found the artist in myself and in my world once again I became refreshed and touched by my inner child once again inspired!"

"I gave my insides!! My cooperation, my inner thoughts...my fears"

"I gave myself—the self I didn't know I had!...I gained a sense of awareness."

"I gave questions! I gained a sense of peace, safe risk taking, insight into my own character traits, thoughts, styles that I'd like to change (or shatter)! Knowledge, a sense of play..."

"I gained so much! I gained insight into real hesitations of others; I learned how I NEEDED these experiences. This course was invaluable in absorbing a vocabulary that is non-judgmental, a vocabulary that encourages and challenges in a non threatening way."

“I gained a sense of community. I want to let my class feel like a family. Not to get too bogged down with staying on task. Trying hard to integrate art in every way I can!”

“I gained a better understanding of how to integrate the arts into the curriculum, a more secure feeling on using different art mediums and materials, confidence in myself as an artist, a closer relationship and appreciation for other staff members who participated in this experience.”

These heartfelt responses mirror the attributes of compassionate community and reflect the goals of arts engagements: insight, awareness, trust, and the meeting of our inner selves as creative and caring learners. These are the insights and understandings teachers need to experience just as desperately as our children and our students. These are also the insights and understandings we need to bring to the parents of our students as we not only invite them into our community but hope for their support in the continued valuing and development of compassionate communities and arts engagements in school, at home, and beyond. Ultimately, these are the insights and understandings we must cultivate in our future teachers!

Additional workshops will be planned throughout the year based on teacher needs and inspirations. Assessment and Portfolios have been identified as a specific area of developmental need as was the desire for more engaged art-making workshops. Additional art education students from Plymouth State College will again be volunteering in order to provide every team member with added support at the beginning of the year. I will remain as a consultant, participant, and collaborative team member. Principal Tocci plans to invite university methods students and students ready for student teaching from Plymouth State College and the University of New Hampshire Education programs to work with these teachers.

Implications

The design and implementation of this model, is, I believe, one of the most direct broader impacts of our work to develop a compassionate community relative to the larger web of the Gilford Elementary School Community, visiting schools who come to Gilford Elementary School as a model Higher Order Thinking School, and university students of education at undergraduate and graduate levels. Gilford represents a school where change is happening, where the arts are being valued as expressive languages for making meaning and building a relational community, and where there is a team of nine teachers trying to build compassionate communities and infuse the daily learning of their students with engaged art-making. Here we have a site that can be a model for the ongoing development of compassionate community, fully

integrated arts engagements, and multilingual-multivoiced dialogic learning. We can learn, study and grow together.

Accompanying the implementation of this model, is an attitude of exploration, experimentation, and openness of the teachers and an affirmation of their support by the administration. We emphasized that this was an experimental model, which meant that change, adaptation, flexibility, and ongoing evaluation and discussion were anticipated. The model is only a detailed drawing of possibilities, drawn with pencil and eraser. Although labeled a “model” I am wary of such nomenclature. I prefer to use a more flexible term such as “design,” which can be both noun and verb and implies movement and ongoing change. The implementation of this vision will involve continual evolution and change in response to the ongoing needs of children, teachers, and community. Critical feedback is essential. There is a beginning, an opening of consciousness, and support. I will need to continue to follow their growth and development. The current and future impact of this implementation will indicate how sustainable our vision will be when woven into classrooms of diverse grade levels, evermore diverse children, and diverse teachers. A longitudinal study forms in my mind.

Based upon the depth of care within our community, a new concern and question for additional research emerges: what are the implications of retention and yearly grade level changes of teacher, classroom, and community for children if we examine these practices in the light of care and within the context of developing compassionate communities that value children’s diversity, individuality, and multiple literacies? What are the implications of looping classes examined through the lens of compassionate community? What are the implications and impacts of labeling our children and limiting the range of their literacies? How habituated have we become to the traditional structures of schools and paradigms that nurture conformity, separation, hierarchical competition, and marginalization? How habituated have we become to a loss of care and relation?

The practice and development of such a model at Gilford Elementary School further offers unique opportunities for extended research across the many areas of identified impacts within his scholarship and developing impacts not yet identified. As an art educator, I am particularly concerned with the need for new studies concerning the artistic/creative growth and development of children who are experiencing artistic grace and the opportunity to practice engaged art-making daily. How will such practice affect their

aesthetic sensibilities, aesthetic values, schematic development, linguistic fluency, and their sense of personal artistry? What implications will such growth and development have upon our traditions of labeling children as artistically gifted and talented? As an educator concerned with the practice of care, I ask how will such continued practice affect the development of our children's critical consciousness, capabilities of empathy and compassion, sense of confidence and inner harmony, awareness of others, belonging, sense of mutual responsibilities, attitude towards learning...all of the manifestations of impact identified in this scholarship but continued consistently throughout the children's elementary schooling rather than being an isolated occurrence in their lives.

How will such consistent developments affect the need for change in our current practices for teacher education: undergraduate, graduate, and professional development? How will such developments affect the needs for the training and preparation of our school administrators and policy makers? I believe that we need to seriously consider how we can prepare our teachers and administrators to be able to be practitioners and modelers of care, engagement, and multivoiced and multilingual dialogue. What kind of learning experiences, research, programs of study, and encounters do they need for the development of their envisionment and of their being fully present? Can we bring the meeting ground into the university and pursue scholarship, compassionate community, and engagements with the arts as part of a wholeness of being and attending and becoming?

I am evermore committed to the development of care communities and the infusion of the arts into the daily learning encounters of children and adults. I profoundly believe that education needs to change. and to explicitly address our inner life and capabilities of empathy, care, and relationship. We live in an ever uncertain, changing, and violent world. We and our children, not only face these problems and challenges, but live them. What essential understandings and capabilities will guide us to restore a relationship and community in our world? What skills, capabilities, and understandings will bring an ever increasing sense of awe and wonder and fulfillment as we live our lives? I reiterate the words of Noddings (1983), asking us to examine educational practice, our questions, and our concerns using the values of care and relation as our most fundamental guide.

Reflections and More Questions

What avail is it to win prescribed amounts of information about geography

and history, to win the ability to read and write, if in the process, the individual loses his own soul: loses his appreciation of things worthwhile, of the values to which these things are relative; if he loses the desire to apply what he has learned, and above all, loses the ability to extract meanings from his future experiences as they occur (Dewey 1938, p. 49).

What is learning if it does not address our inner selves and capabilities of relationship? What if learning does not bring us to a meeting ground of possibilities within our selves, with one another, and with our world? What is learning for if it does help us to be able to fulfill our basic human needs to find relationship, to make special, to wonder, to make meaning, to love and be loved, to know that we are capable, connected, and cared for?

What issue or subject could be more relevant to the learner than The nature of oneself and one's world at this time and place? This Experiential art program starts with plotting the map of oneself and of the landscape one treads daily. In as much as Who am I? Where am I? And How can I go from where I am to where I want to be? Are relevant questions, this program is relevant. Students investigate other people's experiences and settings to seek parallels and contrasts that confirm and expand the quality of their own personal perceptions and expressions.

Like the entire human species, the child has an insatiable desire to know more and do better. The constant shower of intriguing information that loving brings can't help but promote children's appetite for ever more extensive engagements with their world. This drive for increasing experience ensures us that although the curriculum starts with the self, the expanding self will not be satisfied with peering at itself alone; it will naturally expand toward other relevant associations: the family, neighborhood, community, nation, world. This is the basic observation Viktor Lowenfeld makes in *Creative and Mental Growth* (London 1994, pp. 32-33).

Can we sustain life and learning without being in community with one another? Without knowing our own inner self, the inner selves of others, or being able to fully engage with our world? Without ever (or rarely ever) feeling wonderment, engagement, and envisionment?

These questions and their implications, I believe, concern fundamental epistemological understandings, relational values, and a vision of school as a place to practice and learn care, compassion, and wonderment. School could be a place where community begins and grows ever outward. School could be a place of engagement, envisionment, creating, and developing the multiple literacies needed to be artists of life and of living. School could be a place where we cooperatively seek to take off the blinders of habituated consciousness, habituated perception, and habituated responding. Yes, an ideal, but every step taken towards such an ideal, is a step forward nonetheless. Boundaries cannot be traversed without movement or action whether they are internal or external, symbolic or concrete.

I experienced, with Wendy, our fifteen children, and the community members with whom we connected, a compassionate community in school. I am now experiencing the development of nine compassionate communities that are interconnecting and growing. I know our vision is possible. I also know that this transformation involves many soul-searching paradigmatic changes in our conceptualization of knowledge, learning, community, and schools, which I have tried to bring into discussion during the telling of this research story.

Conclusion

My journey began with a very open question. The answering of this question necessitated the development of a clear conceptual framework. The valuing and nurturing of care needed to be explicated as being the most essential and primary goal of education and as being the core basis from which educational decisions would be viewed and decided. Critical to this ethical foundation was an understanding of care in terms of relational reciprocity, of entering into encounters between I and Thou, of the possibility of co-arising, and being fully present within ourselves and our world. Visual art needed to be understood as a universal language with which every human being can make meaning and that is particularly sensitive to communication between I and Thou. Visual art also needed to be viewed within the context of children's development and children's understandings—not from an adult, culturally conditioned aesthetic lens. Of utmost importance, visual art-making needed to be understood as an act and process of encounter and engagement that integrates heart, body, mind, and spirit while embodying empathetic projection/reception.

Bringing visual arts engagements into the daily learning and daily lives of the first-grade children at Gilford Elementary School did have a constellation of significant impacts as previously discussed. Reflection and analysis of these interrelated impacts leads me to answer my initial question with Yes, the visual arts engagements can be an extremely sensitive and dynamic language through which we can develop compassionate communities in our schools and that can be used as a fundamental means of making meaning and communicating for all students; for bringing all our students and ourselves into relationship.

There can be no true community without relationship. There can be no compassion without relationship. Care necessitates and emanates from being in relationship. Relationship develops from I-Thou meetings, encounters, and presence; eventually developing into a reciprocity of presence and interlocation.

As I give my complete attention and I-presence to Thou, I enter into relationship with my innermost self and call to the innermost self of another to whom I give the gift of my presence.

I perceived, with an awakened insight, so very simple and yet complex, how when our children engaged in the process of engaged art-making their innermost selves became present. Their innermost selves entered into relation with their art expressions, the subjects and/or objects of their attention, and with each other. their subsequent dialogues and ongoing encounters were between I's and Thou's. I believe that Thich Nhat Hahn would describe the children during these engagements as being fully present and fully mindful. In essence, they were practicing a form of mindfulness meditation in action. As the children engaged in art-making everyday, so, too, they engaged in acts of mindfulness, empathy, meditation, and care. Everyday. Everyday their relational awareness and sensitivity was practiced, was heightened, was valued, and enabled. This, for me, is the most fundamental and confirmational of insights that I gained. Practicing mindfulness everyday is offers us the opportunity to develop our self-awareness and self-care and simultaneously develop our awareness and care for others and our world. Here is the essence of our humanity and our well-being.

How was another question of concern; a how sensitive to the diversity of educational contexts and situations, and to the diverse needs of our children and learners—for we, as teachers, are also learners. Again, the answer I perceive is deceptively simple and returns to Noddings emphasis of model, practice, and dialogue. Model the valuing of the visual arts as a universal yet unique language of meaning-making and personal expression (I am assuming the co-modeling and valuing of care to be explicitly in place). Practice engaged art-making on a daily basis—offering opportunities of choice for such art-making as part of our shared daily lives. Practice and model engaged dialogue inviting many languages and listening to all voices. When we do so, the meetings between and among I and Thou become manifest encounters. As these meetings become part of our daily lived lives, our relational community of care and compassion also becomes manifest and permeates our being.

We must begin to replace separation with connection, interrelationship and values of care. The opportunity for multi voiced and multi lingual dialogue increases our opportunities for participation, for listening, for speaking. We can engage with diverse perspectives that can enhance our awareness and heighten our consciousness. Again and again I have returned to the spiral constellation of the

compassionate community woven around the three core strands of empathy and self-care, engagement and heightened perceptual sensitivity, and multivoiced-multilingual dialogue. Again, the arts sustain this weaving and enable our innermost heartfelt voice to speak. The compassionate community receives this voice with care and confirmation in return. Through such heartfelt dialogues and personal stories we encounter each other's Thou. Care begins to swirl around us, within us, between us, and through us, touching the minds, hearts, and spirits of our children.

In India, the greeting namaste literally means,

I greet the light in you. With the bushmen in Africa, the greeting is

I was dead, but now you've come, I live again.

(Corita 1992, p. 204).

These greetings epitomize the greetings we all need to give and receive from one another. These are greetings between "I and Thou." These are greetings that celebrate the individual's inner self while confirming our need to be in caring relationship with one another. So I greet the light in you, my readers and offer you my story. Let us explore and discover our web of life.

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Integrated Instructional Model

Appendix B : Charts and Reference Information

Sensory Cycle of Aesthetic Engagmenet by Vascak
Eisner's Transactional Cycle
Children's Artistic Development/Manipulative Stage
Children's Artistic Development/ Symbol Making Stage
Lowenfeld's Evaluation Criteria and Questions
Eisner's Transactional Cycle
Inspirational Cycle of Sensory Engagement
Guiding Engagement in the Visual Arts: Dialogic Motivation
Art Making Is A Form Of Meaning Making And Story Telling
Aesthetic Scanning
Classroom Physical Space 1997
Classroom Physical Space 1996 (Oellers 1997)
Visual Arts Learning Center Supply List
Flexible Curriculum Time Line 1997-98
Focus Unit of Year 1: Cycles (Oellers 1997)
Amphibian Unit (Oellers 1997)
Lesson Plan and Daily Schedule 8-16-97 (Oellers 1997)
Dear Parents from Cynthia Vascak
Dear Parents from Wendy Oellers Roche (Oellers 1997)
Dear Parents Portfolio Share based upon work of K. Ernst (1994)
Portfolio Sharing based upon work of K.Ernst (1994)
Portfolio Sharing Logs
Gilford elementary Basal Test Scores 1998

Appendix C: Children's Journal-Writing Pages

Appendix D: Children's Writing Drafts

Appendix E: Children's Personal Illustrated Stories

Appendix F: Children's Visual Art

Appendix G: IRB Approval

APPENDIX A: THE INTEGRATED ARTS INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

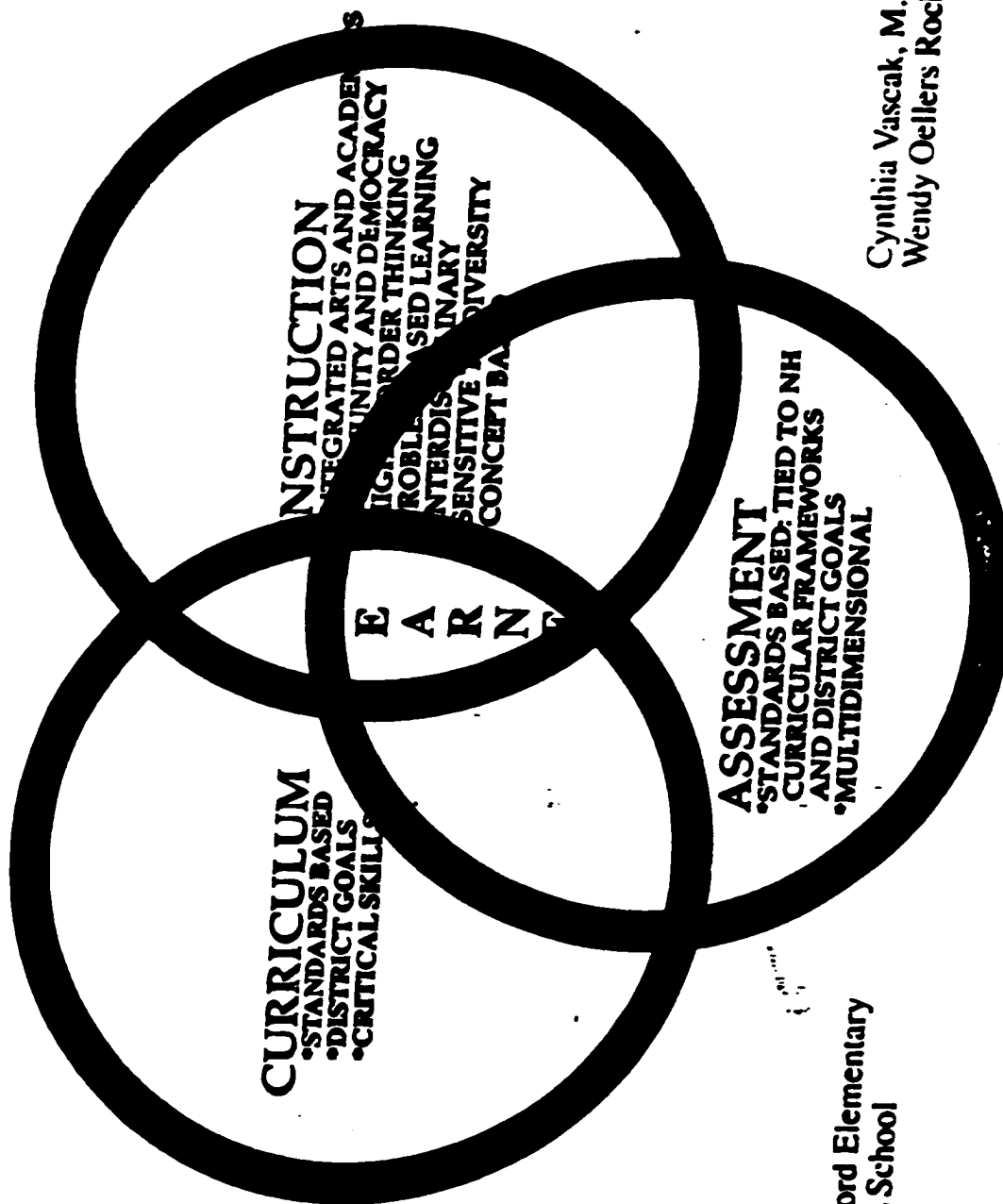
The Integrated Instructional Model: Layers

I. Goals of the Model

II. Core Components of the Model

III. Teaching and Instructional Capabilities

The Integrated Instructional Model

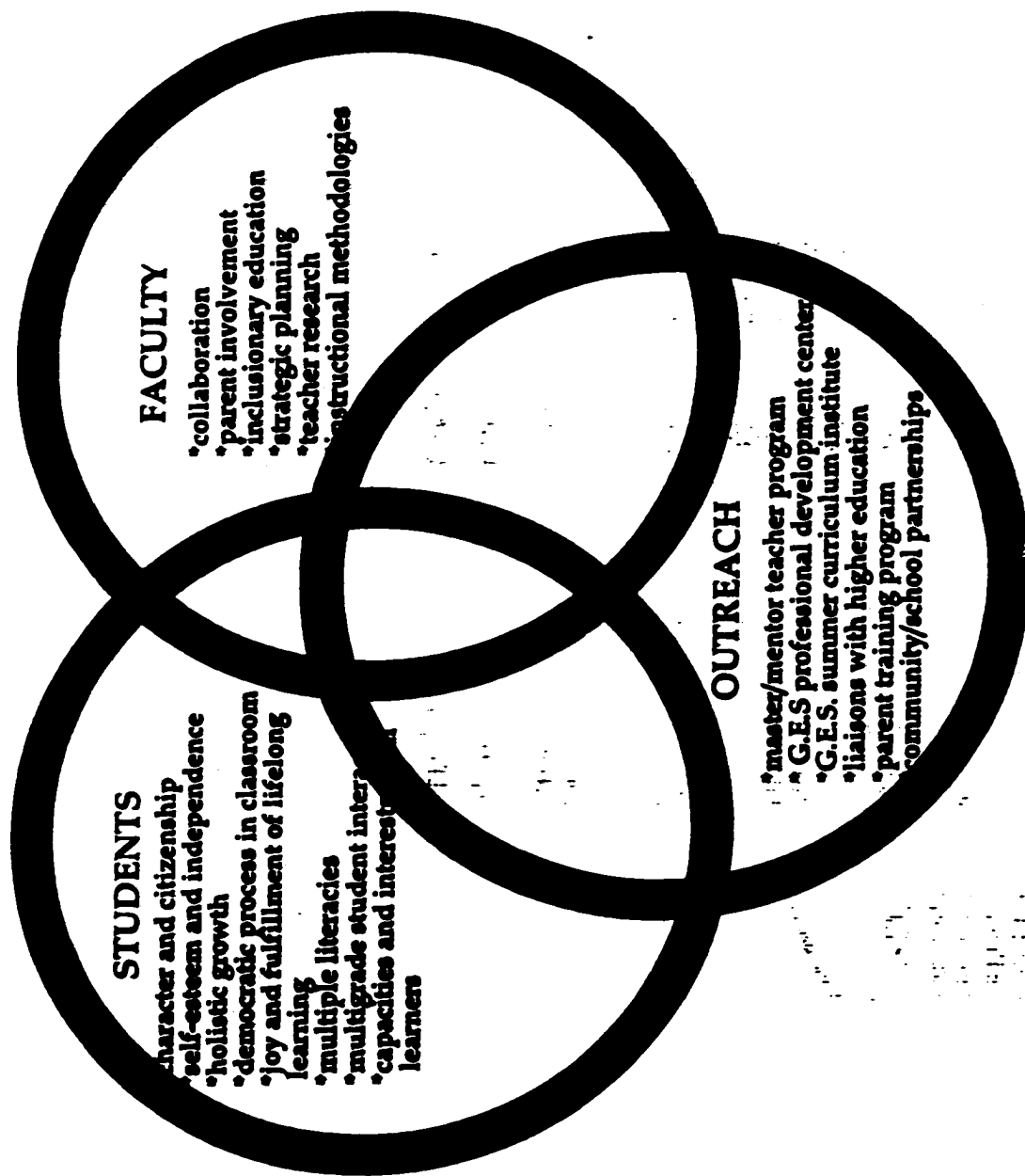


Gilford Elementary
School

Cynthia Vascak, M. F.A.
Wendy Oellers Roche, M.Ed

Integrated Instructional Model Goals

The Promotion and Development of:



NOTE TO USERS

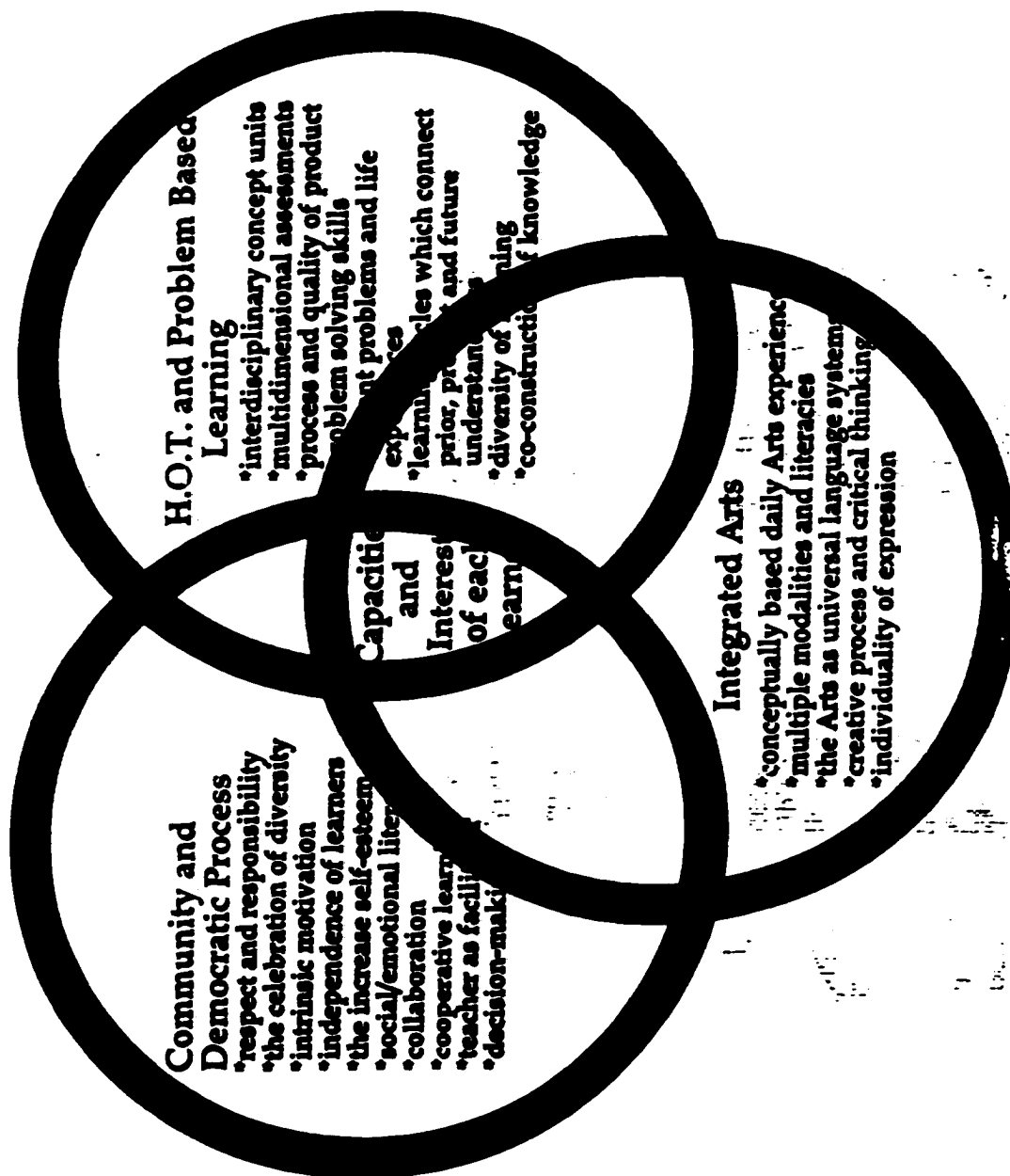
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UMI


The Integrated Instructional Model Core Components will focus on:




**INTEGRATED ARTS IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL
THE TEACHER WILL BE ABLE TO:**

- 
- provide conceptually based daily Arts experiences as components of interdisciplinary units
 - nurture the development of multiple modalities and literacies for communication, reflection, and performance
 - emphasize multiple possibilities and flexibility during the creative problem solving and envisionment process
 - value and appreciate the Arts as universal language systems
 - implement a visual arts learning center in the classroom
 - recognize and develop the creative talents and capabilities of all student
 - promote an appreciation of cultural diversity while celebrating individuality
 - develop multicultural and multidimensional aesthetic values
 - value the Arts as vehicles of instruction and assessment

**COMMUNITY AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESS
IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL
THE TEACHER WILL BE ABLE TO:**

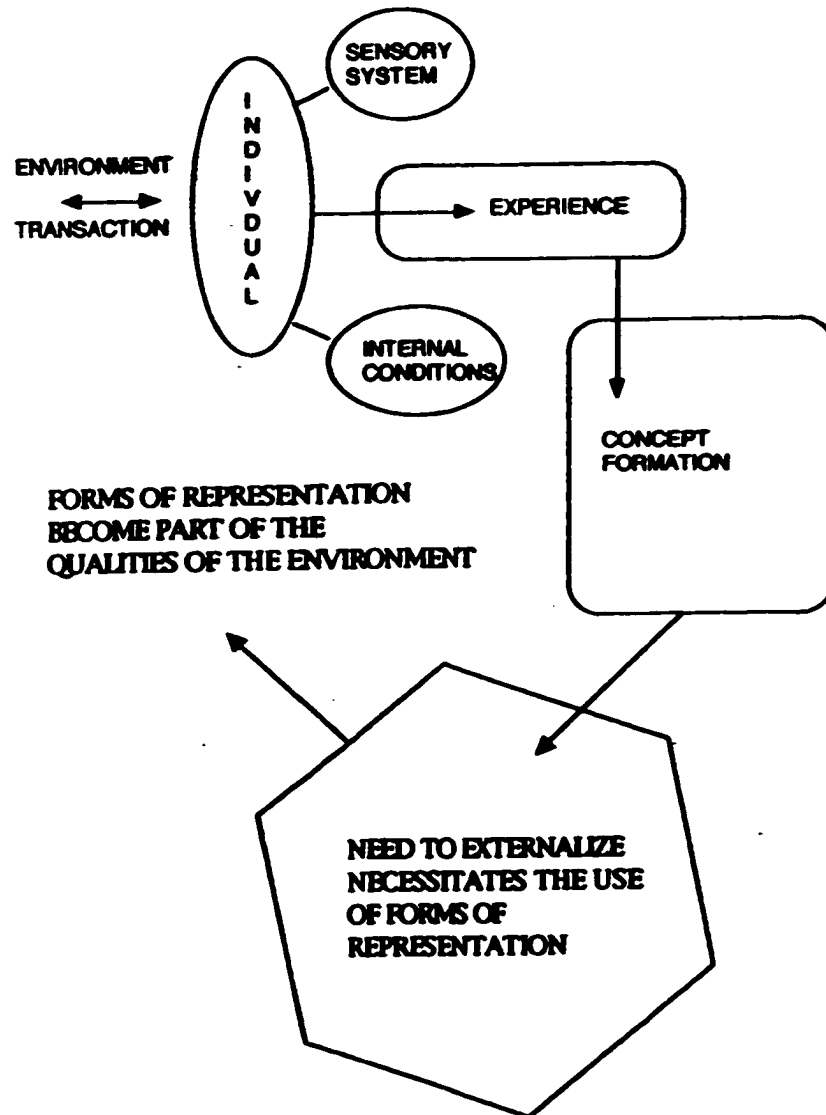
- 
- *promote self and mutual respect and responsibility
 - *celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of each individual
 - *create a responsive and supportive community
 - *develop independent learners
 - *nurture self-confidence and self-esteem
 - *encourage risk taking in the learning process
 - *foster collaboration and cooperative learning
 - *provide opportunities for all students to be successful
 - *promote decision making via the learner
 - *develop social and emotional literacy
 - *become a facilitator
 - *implement democratic process in the classroom

**HIGHER ORDER THINKING AND PROBLEM BASED LEARNING
IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL
THE TEACHER WILL BE ABLE TO:**

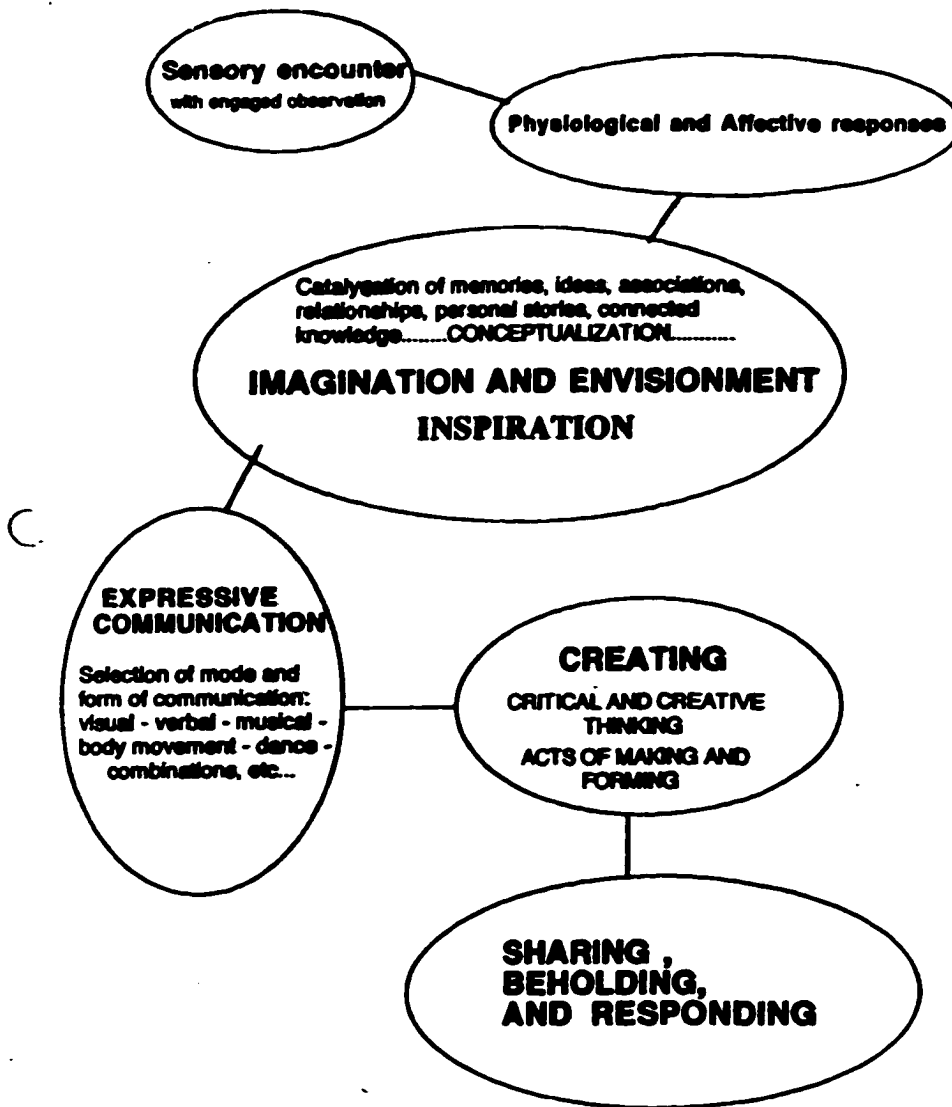
- 
- implement curriculum via interdisciplinary conceptually based units connected to standards and frameworks
 - develop and implement multi-dimensional assessments which emphasize process and quality of product
 - promote creative problem solving skills
 - apply and transfer knowledge and skills to relevant problems and real life experiences
 - generate experiential learning cycles which connect past, present and future understandings
 - value and develop exploration, prediction, inquiry, and research skills
 - support and nurture diversity of learning styles and needs
 - co-construct knowledge with students

APPENDIX B: CHARTS AND REFERENCE INFORMATION

Elsner's Transactional Cycle (Elsner 1994, p. 46)



INSPIRATIONAL CYCLE



Children's Artistic Development
Visual Characteristics
MANIPULATIVE STAGE AGES 2-6 YEARS

Drawing Characteristics	Spatial Characteristics	Figure Representation
Early: Random manipulation / Scribbling		
Use of large motor muscles Kinesthetic pleasure Grasps tool with whole hand Uncontrolled motions Learning correlations between movements and marks and media and marks Color is arbitrary	Use of whole surface of paper but not as space May make marks off the paper	
Middle: Controlled Manipulation / Controlled Scribbling		
Gaining control of marks and knowledge of tools as mark making devices. Repeated motions: longitudinal and circular Uses more wrist motion Can repeat marks and shape configurations Sensory responsiveness Crossings, loops, swirls, and combinations Enclosures	Stays within paper area May draw around prior marks Learning place locations: up, down, near, far, inside, middle... Beginning arrangements	
Late Manipulation: Named Manipulation / Preschematic		
Relates marks to qualities of things and environment Greater variety of lines and marks More use of finger control Planned shapes and combinations Mandalas and Radial configurations Subject may change due to sensory associations Subject is related sensorily and metaphorically to marks and mark making Image may contain vivid personal memories, feelings, and stories Marks also related to actions: running, jumping, swooshing, etc...	Purposeful placement Marks relate to prior marks Spaces take on meanings Inside-Outside placements	NAMING Gestalt people schema

Based upon the works of Lowenfeld (1958 and 82), Hurwitz and Day (1995), Kellogg (1969), and Burton (1983).

**Children's Artistic Development
Visual Characteristics
MANIPULATIVE STAGE AGES 2-6 YEARS**

Drawing Characteristics

Spatial Characteristics

Figure Representation

Early: Random manipulation / Scribbling

Use of large motor muscles
Kinesthetic pleasure
Grasps tool with whole hand
Uncontrolled motions

Use of whole surface of paper but not as space
May make marks off the paper

Learning correlations between movements and marks and media and marks
Color is arbitrary

Middle: Controlled Manipulation / Controlled Scribbling

Gaining control of marks and knowledge
of tools as mark making devices.
Repeated motions: longitudinal and circular
Uses more wrist motion
Can repeat marks and shape configurations
Sensory responsiveness
Crossings, loops, swirls, and combinations
Enclosures

Stays within paper area
May draw around prior marks
Learning place locations:
up, down, near, far, inside, middle...
Beginning arrangements

Late Manipulation: Named Manipulation / Preschematic

Relates marks to qualities of things
and environment

Purposeful placement

NAMING

Greater variety of lines and marks
More use of finger control
Planned shapes and combinations
Mandalas and Radial configurations

Marks relate to prior marks
Spaces take on meanings
Inside-Outside placements

Gestalt people schema

Subject may change due to sensory associations
Subject is related sensorily and metaphorically to marks and mark making
Image may contain vivid personal memories, feelings, and stories
Marks also related to actions: running, jumping, swooshing, etc...

Based upon the works of Lowenfeld (1958 and 82), Hurwitz and Day (1995), Kellogg (1969), and Burton (1983).

Children's Artistic Development
Visual Characteristics
SYMBOL-MAKING STAGE: AGES 5 - 9 YEARS

Drawing characteristics	Spatial characteristics	Figure Representation
Early Symbols		
Use of fluid geometric shapes Placement and size can signify emotive importance Colors are generally random Non-proportional relationships body parts I, Me, My subjects Schema are highly idiosyncratic and individual Schema represent generalized concepts and categories Intrinsic sensitivity of balance in design Exaggerations indicate emotional and/or sensory importance	Objects seem to float around page Paper may be rotated Schema can be manipulated to fit space	Use of gestalt schemas Early schemas look like giant tadpole heads Gradual inclusion of extensions and Gradual differentiation
Middle Symbol Making		
Schema becoming more details and will be constantly repeated Schema may alter due to sensory impact Use of bold direct line and outline X-Ray drawings colored over Color tends to concretely match Drawings re-present children's growing knowledge and experience of the world. Drawings tell personal stories and reflect personal interests, ideas, emotions, and concerns.	Concrete spatial location Base or ground lines at bottom of page, sky at top Little or no overlapping Multiple viewpoints Fusion of time and space Fold over views	Many details of body parts Differentiation of gender Proportions often reflect emotional importance Trying to show action
Late Symbol- Making		
Inclusion of many details for differentiation and characterization Highly aware of environment Sensitive to variations of colors Beginning perception of light and shadow Schema becoming flexible Combination of schematic and observational re-presentations of subject matter. Complex narrative themes, interests, and expressions.	Base line moves to horizon line Overlapping Smaller sizes = Far away Higher up - Farther away Experimenting with distance Sky meets ground	Rigidity of schema is changing Use of clothing details Concern for differentiation Depiction of action More natural proportions Facial details and expressions

Based upon the works of Lowenfeld (1958 and 82), Hurwitz and Day (1995), Burton (1983) and Smith (1983).

**Lowenfeld's Evaluation Criteria and Questions
Children's Holistic Growth and Development
As Manifested in Children's 2 Dimensional Art**

Scribbling Stage 2-4yrs

Preschematic Stage 4-7 yrs.

Areas of Growth

Intellectual Growth

- * Are lines only uncontrolled?
- * Are movements controlled and repeated?
- * Is the mark making named?

- * Does representation show more than head and feet?
- * Is there an increased use of detail for differentiation?
- * Are body parts and features included?
- * Is the drawing named and representational?

Emotional Growth

- * Does the child enjoy scribbling?
- * Is Scribbling continuous vs. interrupted?
- * Are motions fluid and forceful?
- * Does movement and intensity of mark change?

- * Do visual concepts keep changing?
- * Does the child rely on stereotypic symbols?
- * Does exaggeration reflect importance?
- * Does the child get lost in one part of the drawing and lose the rest?
- * Do the drawing marks exhibit confidence?
- * Does child relate things which are personally important?

Social Growth

- * Does child concentrate and give attention to movement and mark making?
- * Does child display engagement and attention?
- * Is child easily distracted?

- * Does image relate to experience?
- * Is order related to emotional relationships?
- * Does image display spatial relationships which correlate to environmental relationships?
- * Does imagery reflect environmental awareness?

Perceptual Growth

- * Does child use full range of movement?
- * Are motions visually controlled?
- * Are colors used to differentiate subjects?

- * Is there a use of non geometric lines?
- * Does child interpret movements and sounds?
- * Is color related to objects?

Physical Growth

- * Are marks made with firm pressure?
- * Are lines bold and made with full motion of arm?

- * Is omission of body parts inconsistent?
- * Are lines and marks continuous and firm?

Aesthetic Growth

- * Are marks distributed across the whole surface?
- * Is there a sense of visual balance in the distribution of lines and marks?

- * Is meaningful space integrated with non-meaningful space?
- * Is the organization of imagery appear as important as the content?
- * Are colors used decoratively to enhance overall image?
- * Is there a desire for decoration and elaboration?

Creative Growth

- * Is the child independently motivated?
- * Is the child confidently independent or dependent?

- * Does the child use personal and independent concepts?
- * When working in a group is the child's personal imagery diminished?

- * Does child go beyond naming and elaborate story?

- * When alone, will the child spontaneously make art in a range of mediums?
- * When alone, is the child's imagery personally generative or do they replicate the work of others?

**Lowenfeld's Evaluation Criteria and Questions
Children's Holistic Growth and Development
As Manifested in children's 2 Dimensional Art**

Schematic Stage 7-9yrs.

Intellectual Growth

- * Are concept developed for familiar objects and subjects? (Schemata)
- * Do concepts have clear characteristics?
- * Are schemata being differentiated?
- * Do colors relate to object/subject?

Emotional Growth

- * Is schema used flexible?
- * Does size variation correlate with significance?
- * Do schema change to indicate significance?
- * Are marks made with determination?
- * Is there a lack of continuous over-exaggeration? details?

Social Growth

- * Does child identify with the experience represented?
- * Are spatial relationships established?
- * Is the environment elaborated and characterized?
- * Is there an awareness of social environment relative to being able to identify with self and others?

Perceptual Growth

- * Are most lines continuous and uninterrupted?
- * Is there an awareness of different textures?
- * Are multiple kinds of shapes and lines utilized?
- * Are distant objects depicted as smaller?
- * Are there signs of body details?
- * Are marks and lines guided purposefully?

Dawning Realism Stage 9-11yrs.

- * Are details used to characterize subjects and self and environment?
- * Does child depart from use of schema?
- * Does child use non geometric lines?
- * Do lines help convey character?
- * Do details retain their identity?
- * Is gender clearly differentiated?
- * Are baselines turning into horizon lines?

- * Is child using more characterization rather than generalization? Identification?
- * Is the drawing stiff or fluid?
- * Are brushstrokes and marks used freely?
 - * Are exaggerations being replaced with

- * Does the child identify self and other in images incorporating groups of people?
- * Are figures and environment spatially related?
- * Is there an awareness of relation of self and other to the environment?
- * Can the child collaborate with others during cooperative art making?

- * Is an horizon line included?
- * Is the child using overlapping?
- * Is distance portrayed by diminishment of size?
- * Is there evidence of awareness of changing light and motion?
- * Does color represent more than characterization?
- * Are the spaces between baselines filled-in?
- * Are textural qualities interpreted?

Lowenfeld's Evaluation Criteria and Questions Continued

Schematic Stage 4-7 yrs.

Physical Growth

- * Are body actions and movements expressed?
- * Are body parts consistently portrayed without continuous exaggerations or omissions?

Aesthetic growth

- * Is work distributed across the whole surface?
- * Is their consideration of the image as a whole?
- * Does the child add decorative details and patterns?

Creative Growth

- * Does the child create personal symbols and concepts?
- * Is schemata varied?
- * Are schemata and symbols for body features and parts being explored and varied?

Dawning Realism Stage 7-9yrs.

- * Are gender distinctions detailed?
- * Are body movements expressed with flexibility?

- * Will the child elaborate beyond the essential and add details, patterns, and design decorations?
- * Is media and material related purposefully to design and expression?
- * Do colors relate visually to one another?
- * Are details in relation to the whole image?

- * Does the child independently choose subjects?
- * Are visual forms invented by the child?
- * Are materials inventively used for personal expressive purposes?

Source: Lowenfeld, 1958. Ed. John Michael. 1982, *The Lowenfeld Lectures*

Guiding Engagement in the Visual Arts Dialogic Motivation

Engagement has been guided by inquiry discussion (Noddings 1992) and by the implementation of dialogic motivation as developed in the works of Smith (1983), Burton (1983), Hurwitz and Day (1995), London (1996), and (Olson 1998, Eds. Simpson, Delaney, Carroll, Hamilton, Kay, Kerlavage, and Olson). This approach to dialogic discussion was implemented with whole class groups of students, small groups, and individuals as appropriate.

Inspiring children to have something meaningful to express about themselves and their relation to the world and the providing of the opportunity to do so is a fundamental component of this discursive process. The urgency to speak (in many language forms) guides the urge for expression and the urgency of expression guides involvement, attention, and sustained engagement. Being enabled to speak something important and to share this expression with others provides for shared meaning making and the mutual sharing of one another's stories. Teacher choices of content should consider the interrelationships of structure, inspiration, meaning, and flexibility. Above all, choices of theme, issue, or subject matter should be about and derived from the learner: should be both reflexive and reflective, personal and relevant, and ultimately key into questions of who am I and what is my relation to the world? (Smith 1983 and London 1996). Within the context of choice and interpretation, there are no right and no wrong answers, no right or wrong visual image, but a divers range of personal explorations, interpretations, and expressions.

A Discussion Guide

Introductory Questions: Invite students to consider something relevant and meaningful for them, which involves them in closer observation and attention to their world, and to themselves. Ideally such an invitation occurs during or following a direct experiential encounter.

Association questions: Develop a series of questions which invite further reflection, the development of highly personal associations, sensory impressions, memories, metaphorical associations, ideas, and feelings which serve to enrich connections, concepts, inspiration, wonderment, and envisionment possibilities while inspiring the urgency to speak. Allow time for students to reflect and consider responses, to listen to one another, to ask more questions, and to engage in the sharing of their ideas, feelings, and stories.

Visualization questions: these questions develop connections between the students' growing knowledge of materials, tools, media, and processes with their emerging visual ideas. these questions engage children in problem solving, inventing, and hypothesizing strategies and possibilities. Demonstrations should be participatory and invite the seeking of multiple ways to use media and materials. Alternative choices, methods, and discoveries are pursued. The children are the primary problem-solvers.

Studio Creating and Making: Students select their tools, materials, media, and workspace.

During this time of creating the teacher's interaction with students is accompanied by specific praise, questions concerning meaning and intentionality, and guided problem solving. The teacher does not make art for the children, does not give meaningless general praise, does not assume interpretations, does not provide how-to formula instruction, nor "correct" images in progress. The teacher supports alternative inquiries, individualized expressions, diversity of interpretation, and exploration. Even alternative and personalized choices of theme and subject are valued and supported.

Public/Private Reflection and Sharing provides confirmation for each individual and the opportunity for ongoing dialog, pursuing depth of shared understandings, and the extending of community involvement and connection-making/ which nurtures empathy and relationships of care.

ART MAKING IS A FORM OF MEANING MAKING AND STORYTELLING

Provide an EXPERIENCE - AN ENCOUNTER - AN ENGAGEMENT

- body-mind-heart
- sensory-perceptual engagement
- empathetic
- personal connections and relevancy go together

Brainstorm Responses and Ideas

- develop personal associations
- develop memories
- connect to prior knowledge
- consider metaphorical relationships
- encourage visualization - pictures in the mind

Approach Problem-solving with media and materials: MORE BRAINSTORMING

- encourage multiple solutions and divergent thinking
- probe possibilities and innovation
- provide opportunity for children to hypothesize and solve problems
- what if's
- if - thens
- how to's
- provide clear explanations for any specific directives regarding process

Creating and Making: the artists at work

- encourage risk taking and individuality
- provide specific praise and positive critical feedback
- ask more questions
- discover the children's stories
- nurture the unusual

Sharing and Beholding

- provide opportunity for children to share their art forms
- celebrate children's individuality and unique ideas
- share personal stories within the art forms
- this is an opportunity to build community
- encourage multimodal performance and demonstration of understandings and learning
- probe within
- create a student gallery on your walls and an artist's/authors chair....

Aesthetic Scanning

Aesthetic Scanning is a process of beholding a work of art which invites the beholder closer and closer into the work of art while engaging the fullest degree of sensory observation, metaphorical association, personalized association, and inquiry concerning contexts of meaning discussions between teacher and students, parent and child, students and students, or personal reflection. "Discussion" may involve verbal interaction, dramatic and gestural interaction, movement, image making, personal writing, group writing, or various combinations of these modalities and symbol systems. The key is the process of engagement. This process may be implemented with children's personal art work, the work of others in the class, the works of professional artists and master artists, the art works of community members, and direct life encounters or transactions. The following presents a sequence of inquiry which may be followed.

DESCRIPTION

This is an observation of physical characteristics, subject matter, media, and art elements. This description is as detailed, specific, attentive, and descriptive as possible. Could you describe this image so clearly and with such detail that someone listening to your description over the telephone could see an image in their mind. Art elements refers to color, shape, space, line, value, texture, and form.

ANALYSIS

Now we begin to analyze how the artist created this image – how was the media utilized? What kind of manipulations and techniques? How were certain effects achieved? How was the image or form organized? Composed? Arranged? Can we discover and consider effects and uses of the design principles: balance, rhythm, movement, proportion, scale, focal point, pattern, harmony, contrast, and unity?

INTERPRETATION

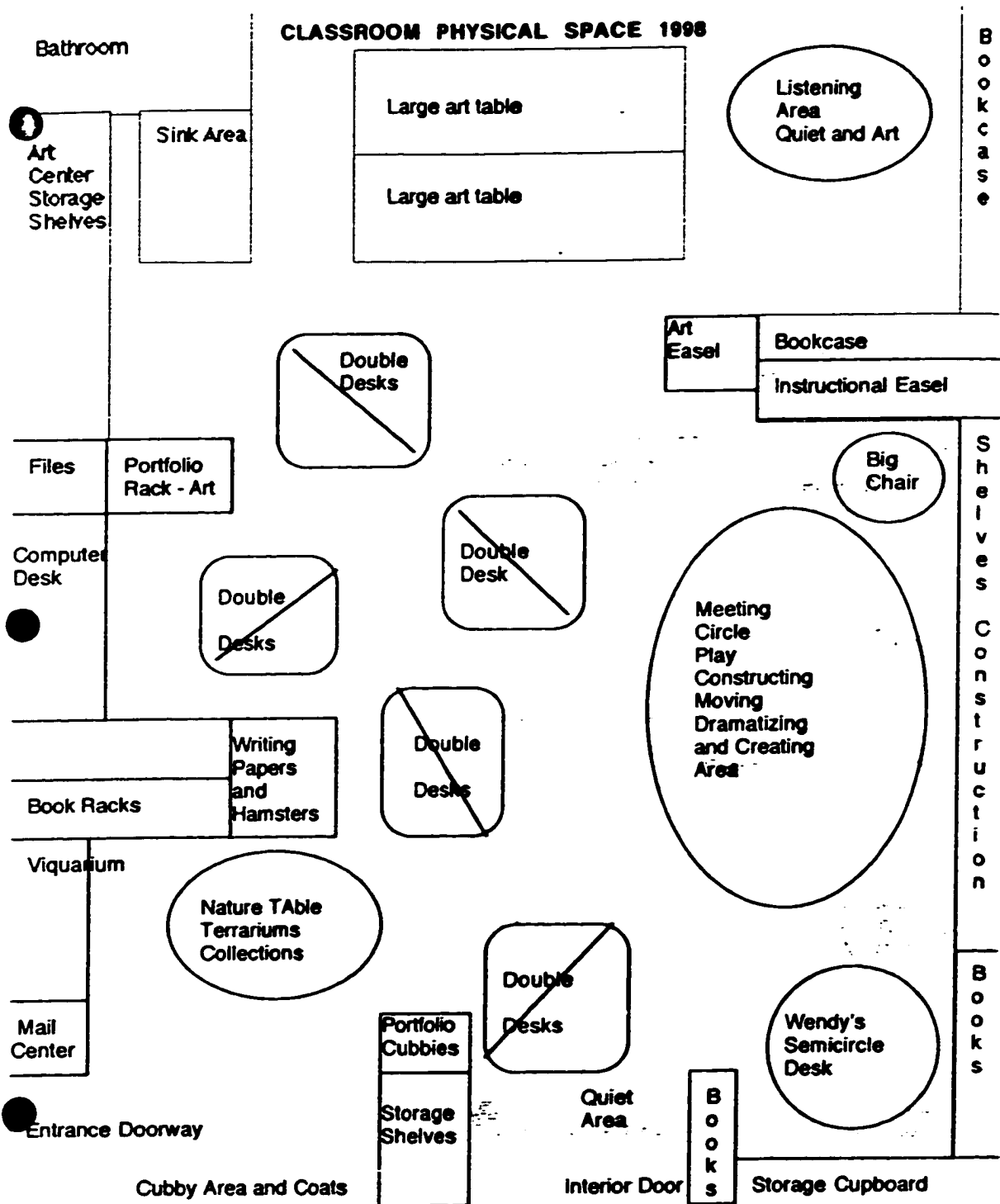
WHAT DOES THE IMAGE MEAN TO YOU? What does the image remind you of? What associations come to mind? Memories? What idea or story or message do you think the artist was trying to convey? If the subject is a person, what kind of person do you think they are? Why? What might they be thinking, feeling, or doing? If the subject is a landscape, what kind of place it is? What can you hear, smell, taste, see, and touch? If the image is abstract, how does it make you feel? What kind of sensations does it give to you? Why do you think the artist made the image this way? How does the image make you feel? What do you begin to think about?

Throughout this process at various points of time, we do need to share biographical information concerning the artist: historical and environmental contexts, cultural contexts, thematic contexts, and personal contexts.

JUDGEMENT

Traditionally, this process leads into the development of judgments where the beholder considers issues and contexts of taste, preference, appreciation, and various criteria for evaluating works of art. Since this stage involves the making of judgements

and the establishing of evaluative criteria, however diverse, I did not apply this stage with the children at Gilford. I wanted to open possibilities of discussion and engagement without becoming involved with formal judgement nor making hierarchical comparisons.



Visual Arts Learning Center Supply List

Assorted Papers 11"x18" and 8"x10"
white drawing paper and computer paper
colored construction paper
watercolor paper when possible
grey bogus paper
manila paper
assorted decorated papers collected from wrapping papers, wallpapers, and made
by the children themselves
texturized papers made by the children and used for collage

Crayons
Craypas
Colored pencils which later became prismacolor pencils
Assorted markers of various widths and colors
Pan watercolor sets
Cake Tempera: red, yellow, blue, white, black, and magenta
Brushes in assorted sizes ranging from very delicate 3/8" to 3" wide
Sponge brushes, discount store bristle, watercolor brushes, flats, and rounded.
Sponges, Q-tips, sticks, paper towels, handiwrap, etc....
Water containers: small and large plastic yogurt containers
White glue by the gallon and smaller plastic squeeze containers
Funnel for glue
Mod Podge
Rulers
Scissors
Assorted yarns and fibers
Collection of organic and man-made items for collaging: collected by all
Styrofoam trays and plates used as palettes
Newspapers
Tarpaulin and shower liner for floor and rug protection
1 dry erase easel
Heavy cardboard for drawing boards
Masking tape and clear tape
Stapler
Smocks collected from donations of old shirts
Plastic containers for supplies: labeled and kept open without lids
Some supplies such as crayons were kept in multiple containers for ease of
distribution.
Beginning collection of artist's posters and calendars
Kandinsky, Klee, Mondrian, Stella, Chagall, O'Keefe, and Van Gogh.
Assorted colors of tissue paper

* All supplies must be non-toxic and child safe. All materials had labels confirming that they were rated AP or CP non-toxic from the Art and Creative Materials Institute.

Focus Unit of Year 1: Cycles

Desired outcome: Student will understand and be able to identify the existence of cycles in the natural world.
Areas of study: Seasons, Trees, Metamorphosis (Butterflies, Amphibians), Calendar, Plants, Mammals, Birds, Families and Rituals (Holidays), Insects, Self and growing, Patterns

PROJECTED TIME LINE*

September Focus

- Building of community
- Calendar
- Patterns
- Butterflies
- Metamorphosis
- Trees
- All about me

October Focus

- Building of community
- Calendar
- Weather
- Seasons: Autumn
- Families/Rituals
- Halloween/Columbus Day
- All about me: Feelings

November Focus

- Building of community
- Seasons and the world around us
- All about me: I am an artist
- Families/Rituals
- Thanksgiving
- Weather patterns

December Focus

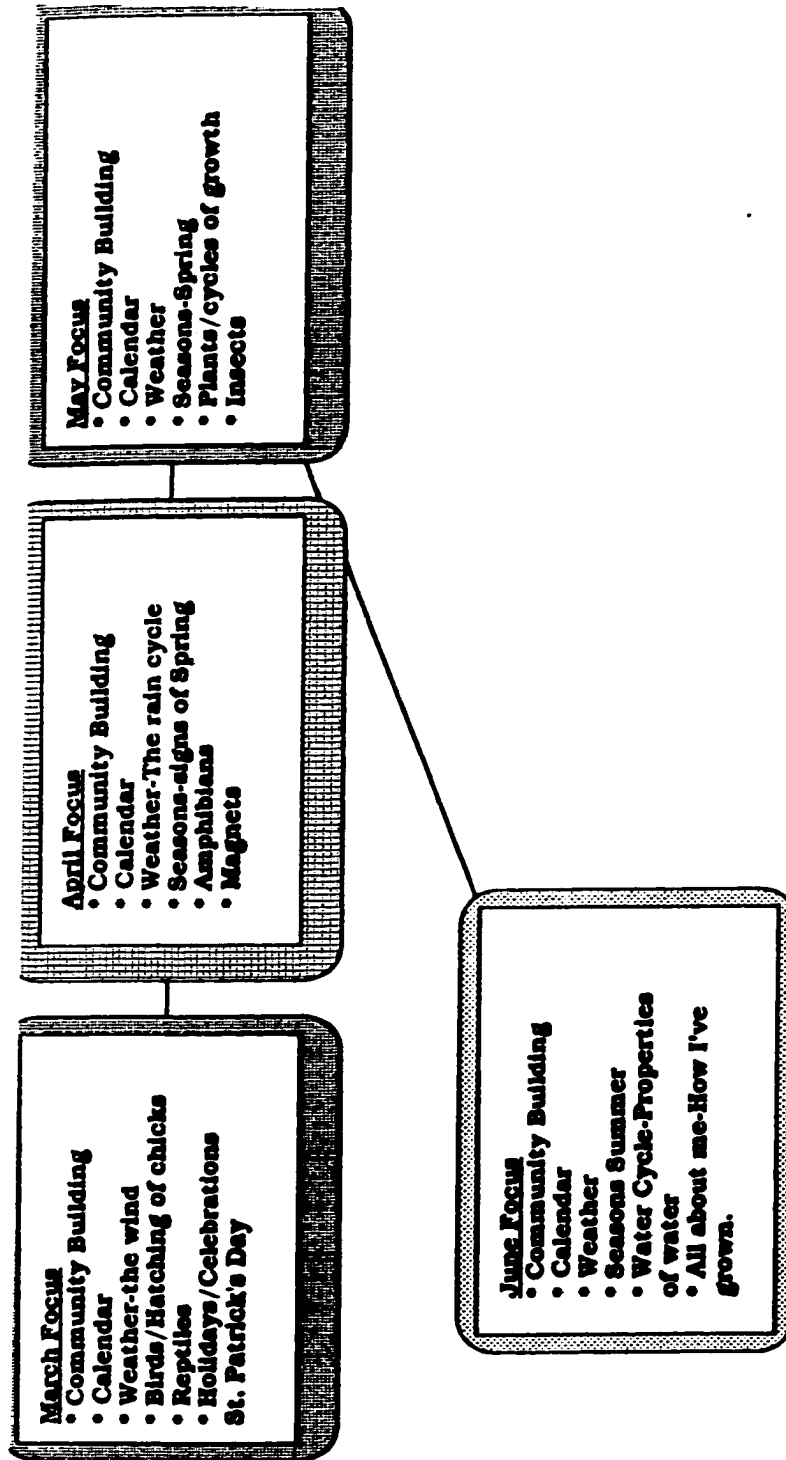
- Building of community
- Calendar
- Weather
- Mammals
- Animals in winter
- Families/Celebrations
- Holidays/Rituals

January Focus

- Building of community
- Calendar
- Weather-Snow and ice
- Animals in winter
- Patterns/Symmetry
- Simple Machines

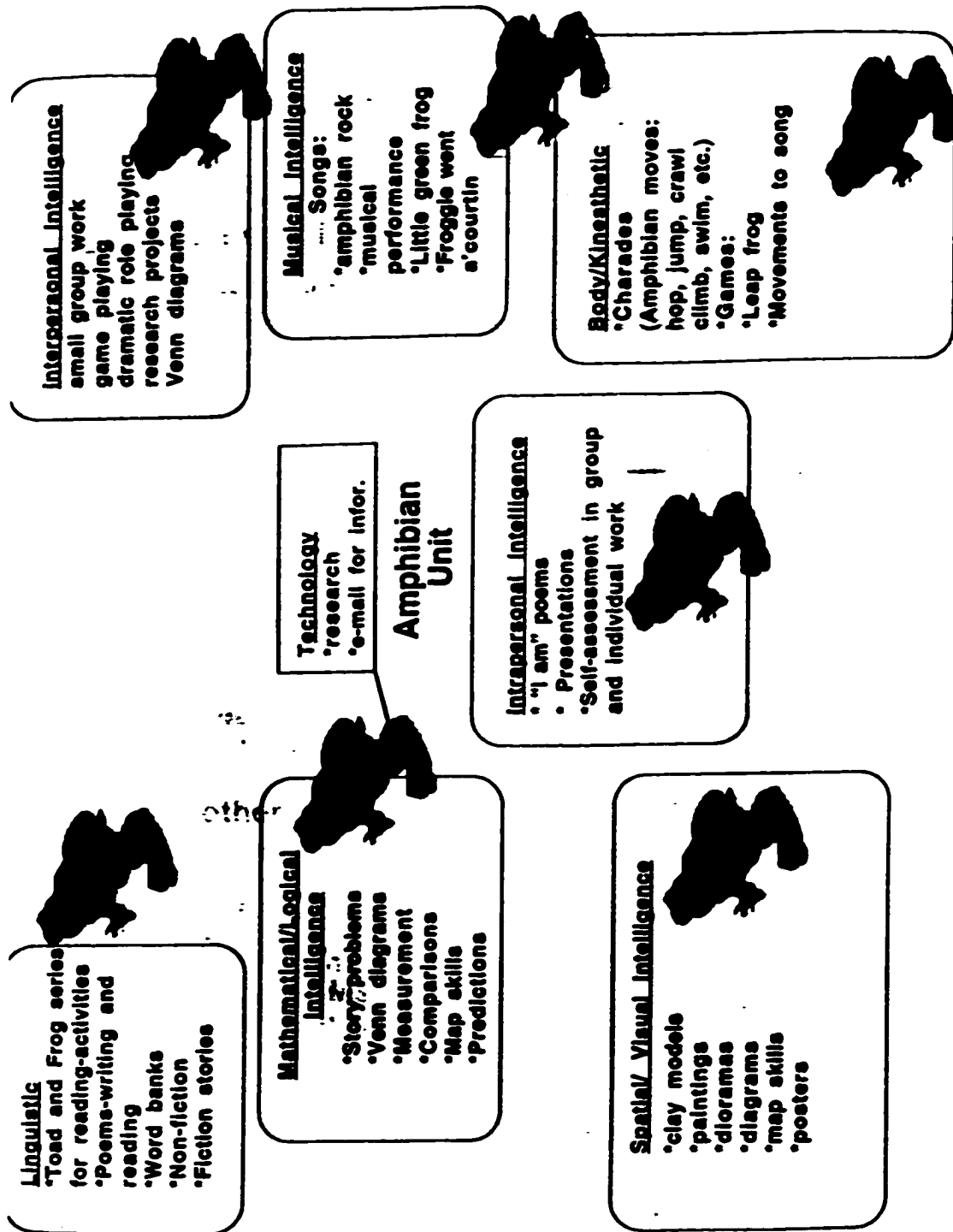
February Focus

- Building of community
- Calendar
- Weather
- Animals in winter/Birds
- Simple machines
- Problem solving with simple machines



Year One lays the foundation for greater discoveries, new explorations and deeper understandings in second grade.

Wendy Oellers Roche Gifford Elementary School 1997



Wendy Oellers Roche



Assessments for Amphibian Unit

Options:
The student will be able to:

Oral Presentation

Include:

- *Animal's name
- *habitat
- *physical characteristics
- *visuals
- *diet
- *unusual characteristics
- *how it moves
- *how it protects itself

Written Report

Include:

- *Animal's name
- *habitat
- *physical characteristics
- *visuals
- *diet
- *unusual characteristics
- *how it moves
- *how it protects itself

Observation sheets

Include:

- *record physical characteristics
- *describes movement
- *notes diet
- *describes habitat
- *different times of day
- *conclusions

Visual and Written Representation of

Life Cycle

- *Correct labels
- Correct number of stages
- *Name of animal

Venn-Diagram

- *Can identify and record similarities and differences between two different animals

Classification

- *Can sort animal picture into correct pile of reptile, amphibian, mammal, bird, fish and define reasons for decisions

Graphs

- *Child can create graph on information collected
- *Child can interpret information from data on graph

Literature

- *Child can define differences between real amphibians and fictional characters

Self Assessment

- *Child will assess what they did,
- *what they could have done better
- *and what they will do next time

Outcome Sheet Science Unit on Amphibians



Vocabulary

herpetologist
amphibian
frogs
salamander
toads
newts
cycle
gills
vertebrate
habitat
metamorphous
larvae

Skills

(Includes minimum standards)

record observations
collect data/record
interpret graphs
organize information
create graphs
create visuals
locates sources for information
writes up information
oral presentation
classify
venn-diagrams-(analyze)
interpret graphs
create model of animal

Understandings

Amphibians have different stages of physical development.
Amphibians hatch from eggs
Amphibians are a class of animals
Amphibians first have gills and then lungs to breathe oxygen
Most amphibians have damp, smooth skin
Amphibians have a backbone
Amphibians have different adaptations to help protect themselves

Certifications for Zoologist

*Can identify an amphibian by its characteristics
*Can define differences between reptile and amphibian
*Completes research project on an amphibian
*Completes one observation sheet on an amphibian
*Can identify different stages of development

Certification for Zoologist-Maximum

*Can identify an animal s either an amphibian, mammal reptile, bird or fish by its physical characteristics
*Can complete a venn diagram on amphibian and /or reptile, mammal, bird fish, or insect
*Completes observation sheet on each type of animal in viquarium

Wendy Oellers Roche-Grade 2 1996

Lesson Plans

Unit: Symmetry/Cycles/Trees

Date: Sept. Friday 16 1997

Special Activity: Art/Field trip Apple Orchard/Mrs. V

8:20-9:00-Morning meeting

Morning Pulse-review job chart/calandar

flag salute/song/discuss day plan

9:00-9:50-Visual and Language arts-Reread the Giving tree-brainstorm and list all the "gifts" that trees give to us-Song -Tree in the hole in the ground-small groups-(random)one with Mrs. V/one with Ms. R. and one seatwork-work on letter review

9:50-10:20-snack and recess

10:20-11:00-art

11:00-Visual and Language arts/small groups/continued

11:45-whole group-read Johnny Appleseed story-ask for ideas that we might find at the orchard-Appletree poem (with actions)-set field trip standards

12:10-lunch-regroup for field trip at 12:30--and bathroom

Field trip to Apple Orchard

On retrun share observations

draw pictures and share of what we saw

record on whole language chart

4:40-large group review first week-What went well-what could have happened differently-what will happen next week

2:5- get ready for home

DISMISSAL**Let the children know when it is time to change centers, get ready for lunch, etc. by turning off lights and giving them a time frame. I.E. In five more minutes, It will be time to get ready for lunch. Put your things away, and show me that you are ready by sitting quietly in your seats.**

*******If children are interrupting during group time and calling out, remind the children that they can have one warning. If it happens again, they need to return to their seat until they are ready to behave in the group. They also know that three times to the chair means a visit with Mr. T. (Also I ask for quiet by counting clearly to five--at the five I say "freeze-if they choose to still talk-they owe five minutes on the line during recess**

***Assessment-**

Math-write and record numbers

Reading-ability to point one to one/characters in story

***Check for permission slips-call on drivers**

Dear Parents,

Each one of us has ideas, feelings, dreams, and imagination.
Each one of us has made sand castles, built snow forts, and watched a beautiful sunset feeling awe and wonder.

We each have the capacity to reflect upon, appraise, and communicate our experiences of the world utilizing many different modes of understanding and languages which incorporate such means as sounds, gestures, marks, and symbols. Visual Art is one of these languages and is a universal language we all share.

Art making for all young children is a means of reflection, organization, and expression of experience. Unique to this process is the use of materials - such as paints, papers, clay, fibers, crayons, etc...which become the vehicles for synthesizing ideas, feelings, and sensations into visual images also known as visual symbols.

While you are looking through your child's portfolio, you will observe that we are sequentially planning art activities which include media and material explorations in order to provide the children with a "vocabulary" of knowledge concerning the expressive qualities of different materials and to develop a repertoire of manipulative skills and choices. The manipulations and explorations can be compared to the early child's exploration of sounds which develops the vocal control necessary with which to articulate controlled sounds and words. During these manipulations, children are also learning to control the making of various kinds of lines, shapes, marks, and colors, while considering organizational possibilities and relationships such as near, far, next to, above, below, center, left, right, inside/outside, and overlapping.

You will also notice the gradual development of individual symbols which represent the various people, animals, places, vehicles, and elements of the environment, etc. These unique symbols are very important elements of your child's development. These images are not adult "pictures-of" but symbolic re-presentation of their world - they are actually inventing their own alphabet of pictographs which is an extremely complex cognitive act known as metaphorical or higher order thinking. This development of symbolization integrates with the learning of reading and writing and number concepts - all of which incorporate highly abstract symbol systems.

Many pictures re-present a whole story or narrative of experience which also allows for reflection and communication of the whole experience accompanied by rich descriptive details. The image holds the memory and accesses more memory while building the narrative voice. Perhaps one of the most important purposes of Art is to tell a story - to share one's

interests and concerns - to share our personal view of the world, our joys, our sorrows - and to touch the ~~lives~~ ^{lives} of one another - finding our uniqueness and our common humanity.

We all have a story to tell. In fact, we all have many stories to tell. Storytelling is an integral part of being human. I suspect that on many occasions, you too, have shared your experiences with friends and family in the form of a story. Story is a natural way to communicate our thoughts, insights, feelings, and experiences with one another. Telling and Listening and Sharing stories is an important way for all people to reflect upon, to order and organize, and to make sense of our life experiences. Stories help us to understand ourselves, our relationships to others, and to consider our responsibilities as world citizens. As teachers, we encourage our students to share their stories and emphasize that their lives and experiences are important and valued! For many young children, who are beginning to write, the story is told first through image and then shaped into words and crafted into writing. Here, the image, again, holds the story, the memory, and inspires the writing. Both are part of a whole conceptual-creative process of dynamic learning.

We hope the portfolios will provide you with the opportunity to share stories with one another.

Thank you.



September 19, 1997

Dear Parents,

It is difficult to believe that almost three weeks have already passed since the beginning of school. Our class of fifteen is already bonding into a supportive, caring community. We have been very busy learning the expectations and routines of first grade. It is a big adjustment from summer and half day kindergarten to all day in school. It is not unusual for first graders to be very tired at the end of the day.

This has also been a time to let me get to know the needs, capacities and interest of your child. We are already immersed in reading. In addition to stories, poems and songs, we are already reading in our story book boxes and are reviewing letter sounds. Math time has the children exploring the concepts of symmetry, patterns, number recognition and one to one correspondence. We are learning about cycles in life and have watched our Monarch butterflies form chrysalises and hatch. On our visit to the apple orchard, we learned about the cycles of growth in trees.

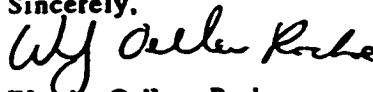
We are also very fortunate to have the talent and expertise from a Plymouth State College professor, Cynthia Vascek. She is a wonderful artist and teacher who is exploring how art can help children develop concepts about themselves and help to build community. Mrs. Vascek is with us on Monday and Wednesday mornings and all day Friday for the first half of the year. Friday's will generally be project days, so it would be helpful if you would send your child in clothes that are not their best.

Our volunteer forms are going home today. I have always welcomed and appreciated volunteers in our classroom. If you are unable to come into school, there are always projects that can be completed at home.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me either at school or at home. My phone number is 524-7705.

I will also be calling you within the next week or so to let you know how your child is doing. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,



Wendy Oellers Roche

P.S. Reminder: snack time is an important time for hungry first graders. Please send in a snack each day. If there is a problem with this, please let me know.

Dear Parents,

This is your child's classroom Art Portfolio which we have been collecting since September. We would like your participation in doing a "Portfolio Share" with your child by looking through these images together and asking the questions we have listed below. This will give you the opportunity to see their work, discuss their work, and share their ideas, feelings, and stories embedded in these images while also observing the progression of their learning and learning interests.

Using the list of questions below as a guide, could you please note both your own and your child's responses resulting from your conversation together using this paper and return this with the portfolio. Remember, this is a time of sharing and learning and not of evaluation.

Thank you for your help and we hope that you enjoy your "Portfolio Share."
Sincerely,

Cynthia Vascak and Wendy Roche

QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about some of your pictures. What are they about? How did you make them?
2. What picture/s do you like best? Why?
3. Where did you get your ideas?
4. What were you feeling or thinking when you made this? Afterwards?
5. How have you changed as an artist since September? Can you show me?
6. What image is most important to you? Why?
7. Is there anything else about your art that you would like to say?

PORTFOLIO SHARING

RESPONSE CARDS

Name: _____

Title of Art: _____

Artist: _____

My Responses

It looks like _____

It has texture like _____

It sounds like _____

It moves like _____

It tastes like _____

It smells like _____

It makes me feel _____

It reminds me of _____

PORTFOLIO SHARING LOG

I SHARED MY PORTFOLIO WITH:

NAME

DATE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

UNIT 1

Use vocabulary
Identify word relationships
Identify word groups
Learn compound words
Infer elements of fiction
Apply information

UNIT 2

Use vocabulary
Identify context clues
Identify connectors
Infer conclusions
Recognize typical relationships
Use context clues

05

09

03

06

05

02

05

05

05

09

03

06

05

02

05

05

98	97	96	95	94	93	92	91
90	89	88	87	86	85	84	83
82	81	80	79	78	77	76	75
74	73	72	71	70	69	68	67
66	65	64	63	62	61	60	59
58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51
50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43
42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35
34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27
26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19
18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3
2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Health- \rightarrow
at end
at
First

BASAL SCORES

119798

DC Heath Unit Test / Assessment									
Class Averages									
1998-1999									
Grade 1									
Unit Average									
McNamara	87	93							
Smith	83	88							
Roskilly	83	87							
Arel	84	80							
Martine	81	81							
Grade 2									
Unit Average									
Roderick	83		91	91	91	83	88	91	
Katz	83		88	91	88	83	88	92	
Roche	80		88	84	88	88	93	94	
Meckstroth	84		88	91	84	84	88	85	
Grade 3									
Unit Average									
Martinez	78	88	71	88	83	88	87	83	
Wirth	79	88	74	88	87	80	88	81	
Lacroix	79	88	75	88	84	85	80	82	
Cozart	80	91	77	91	91	88	87	82	
Whelan	80	88	73	88	88	85	84	83	
Shirley	83	88	80	88	88	88	83	84	
Grade 4									
Unit Average									
Johnson	88	84	88	87	88	91			
Peters	83	77	79	74	81	88			
A/K-Gilder	88	82	88	78	88	88			
A/K - Cool Cow	91	92	83	88	85	93			
Grade 5									
Unit Average									
McNamara	72	73	74	82	83	83			
Watterson		83	80	88	88	88	78		
Undsey	90	91	87	88	88	88			
Belloney		93	83	88	78	88	68	85	
Greene	88	98	91	93	85				

grade level
average
for all
year

First
Grade

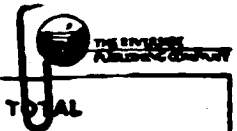
Unitgate

BASAL
SCORES

BASAL SCORES

Class Summary Record *Gate -*

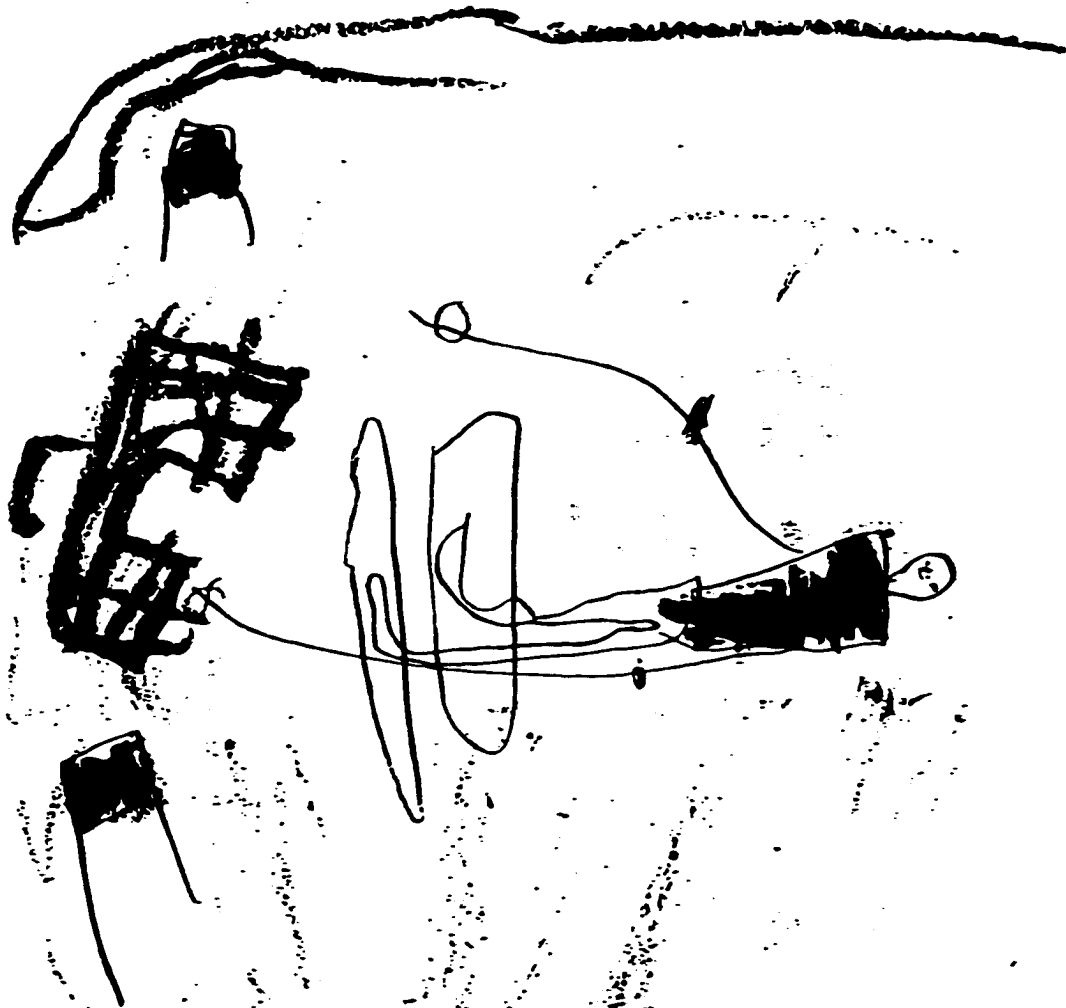
Gates -

[illegible]

BASAL SCORES

APPENDIX C: CHILDREN'S JOURNAL-WRITING PAGES

.



When I'm big I'm
going for Gate
race.

96. Gate-race by
Michael - October

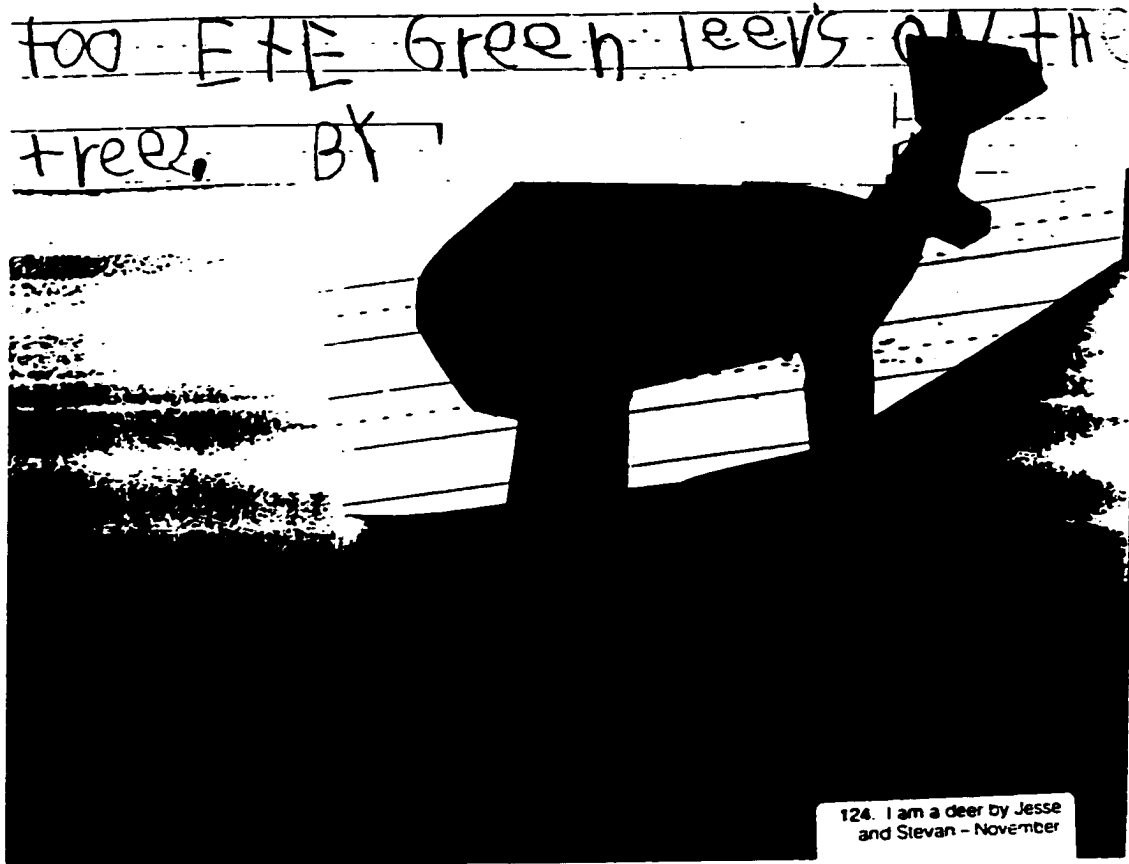


JOHN IS ME-ALIA.

Y-CIT

97 Soft is... by Kern -
September

I am a Deer running in
the Woods looking for some bark
I will go run for EXR512 I love
to eat green leaves off the
tree. BY

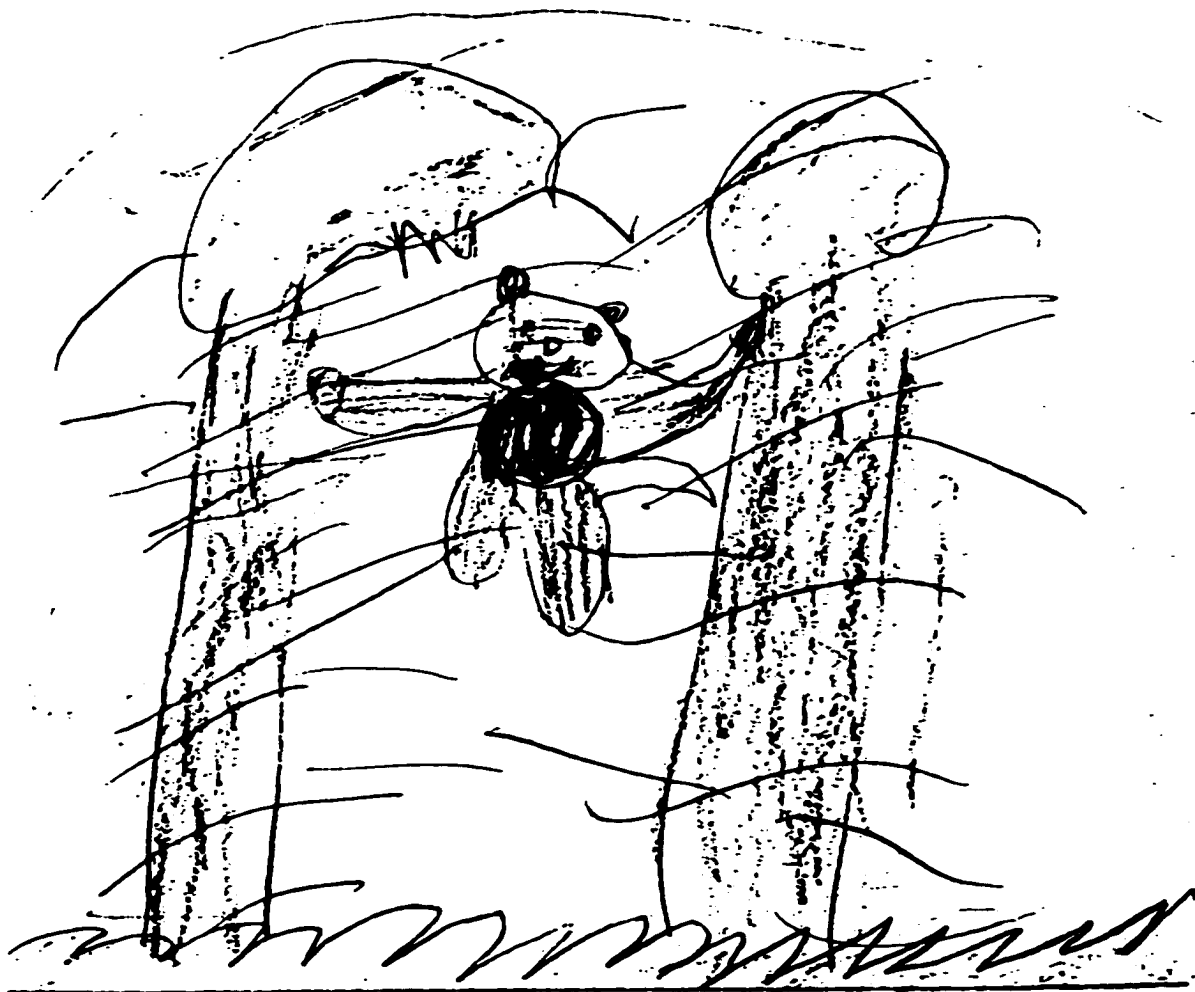


124. I am a deer by Jesse
and Stevan - November



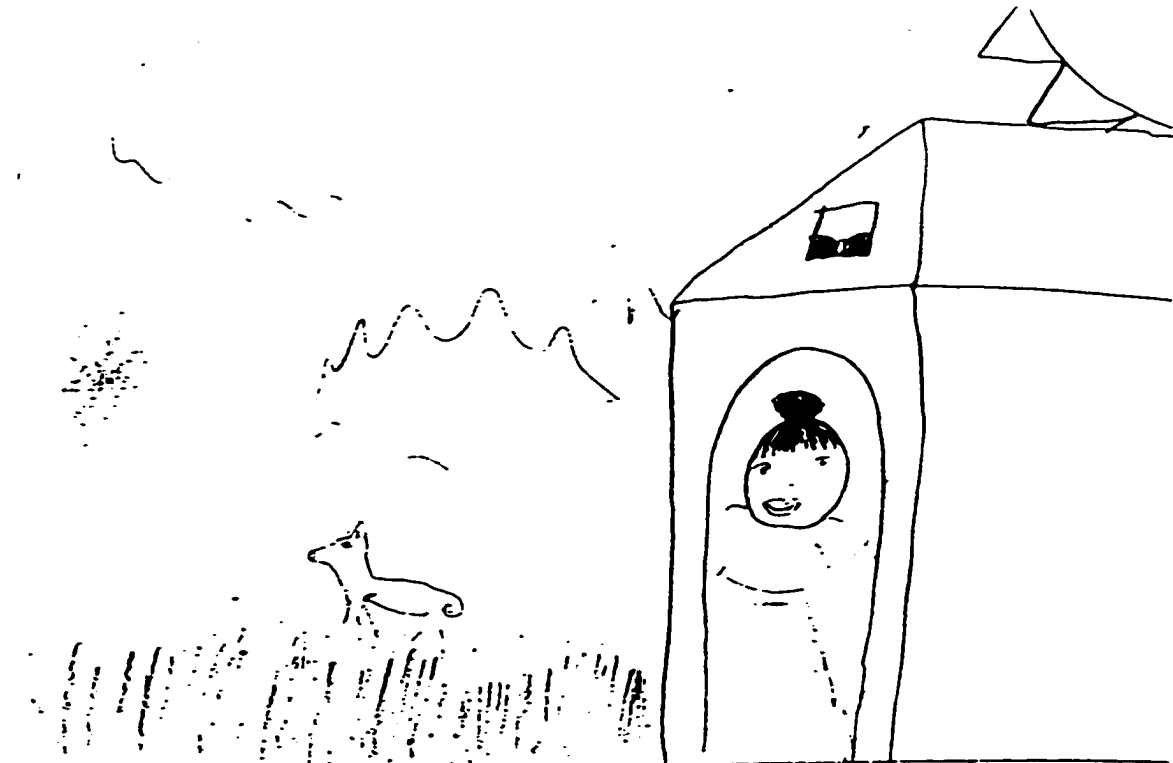
I am as nice as a
Dog sleeping in
the living room.

126. I am as nice as by
Amy - December



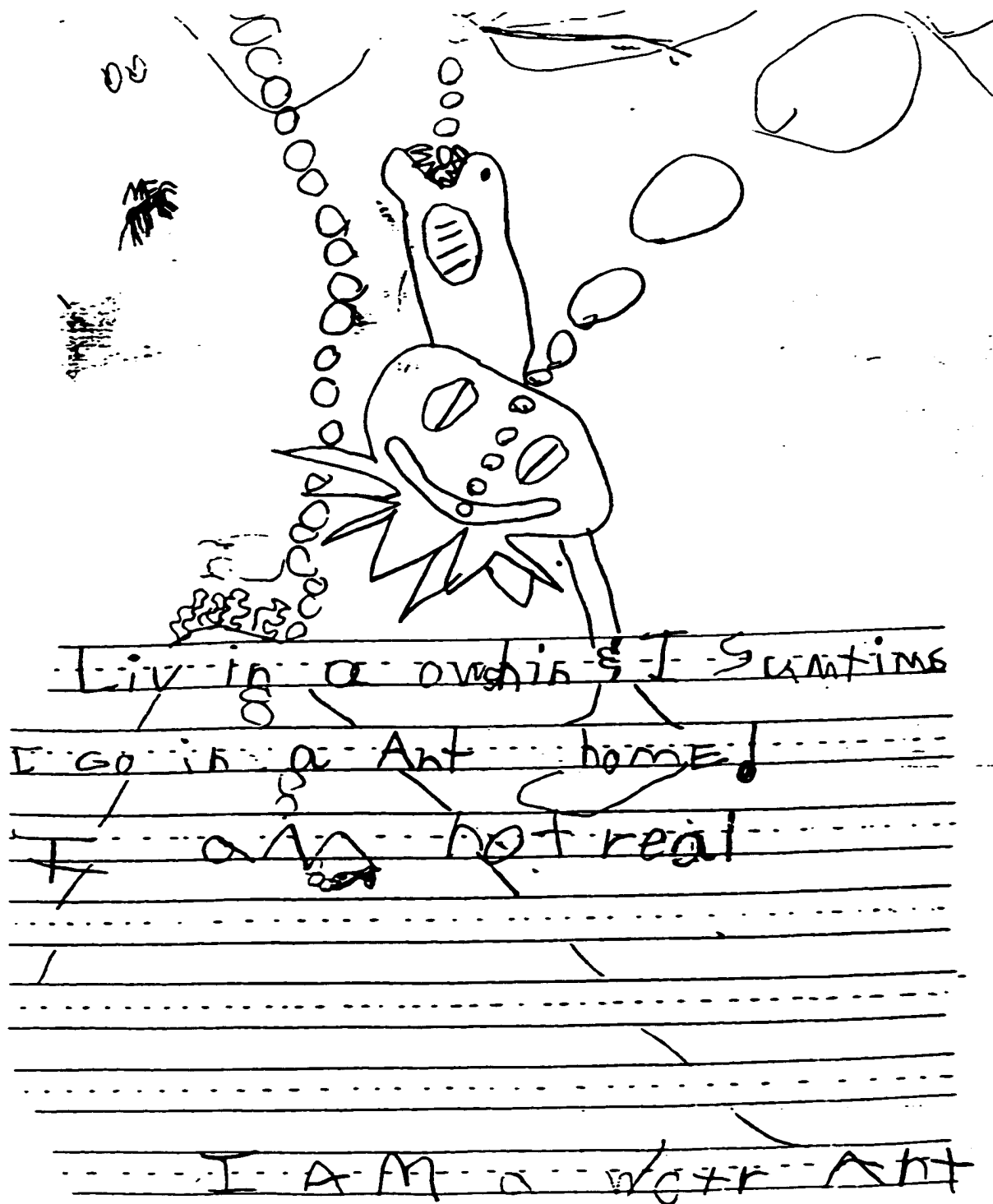
I AM AS WILD AS A MONKEY
 WHEN I CLIMB ON TREES.

127 I am as wild as... by
 Laura - November

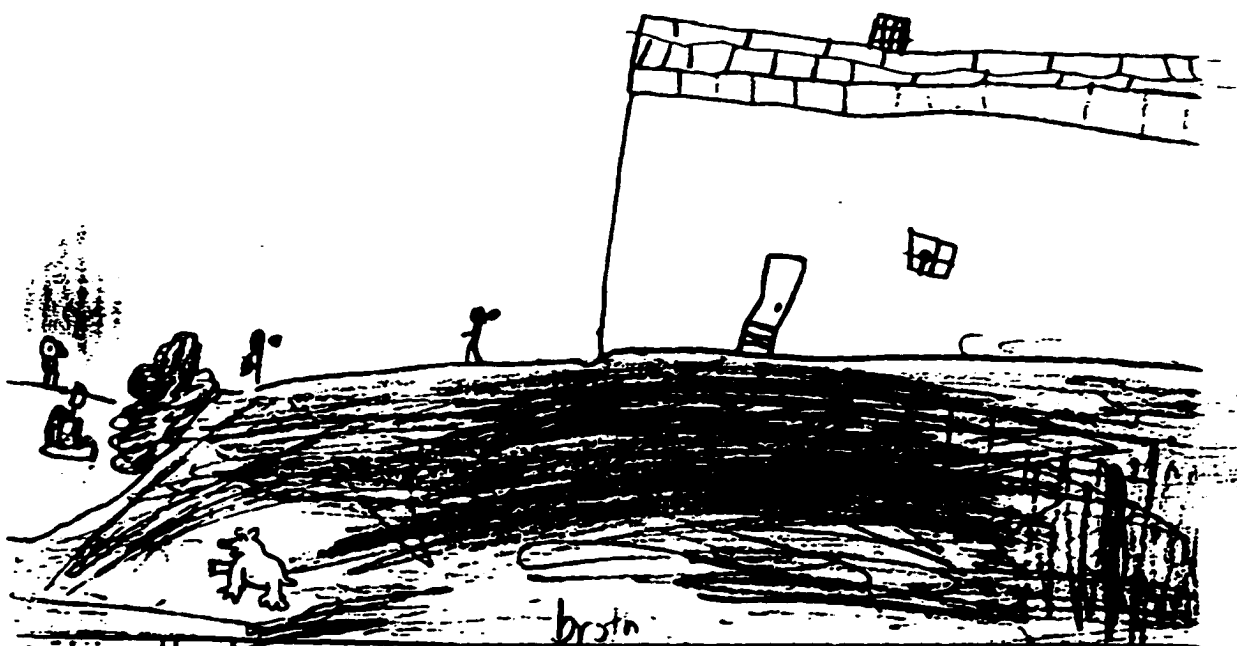


I saw lammas at the llama
farm. They were fluffy like a sheep.
They had velvety noses, and they were
friendly.

98. I saw llama by Marian -
March



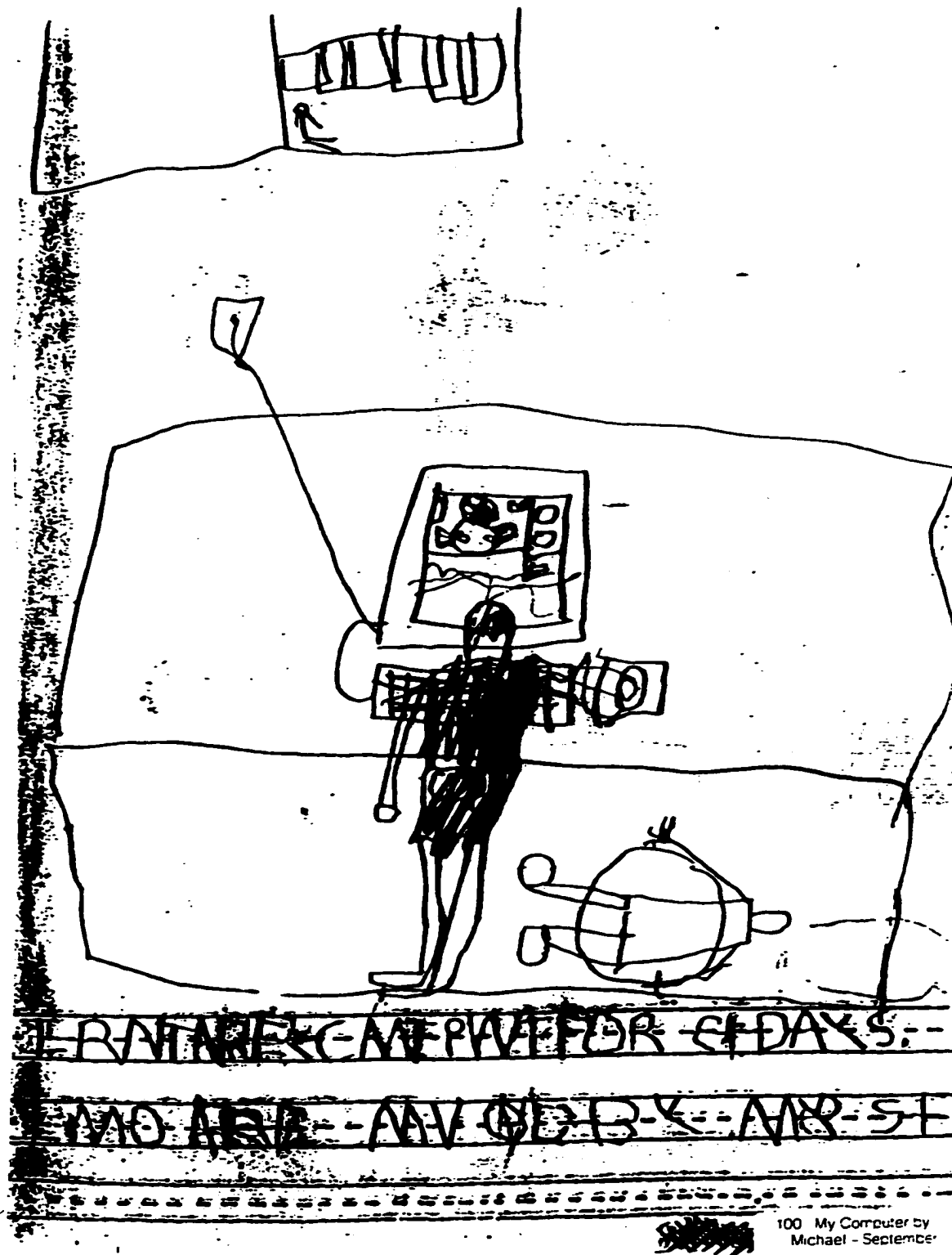
103 I am a water ant by Ky-
- June



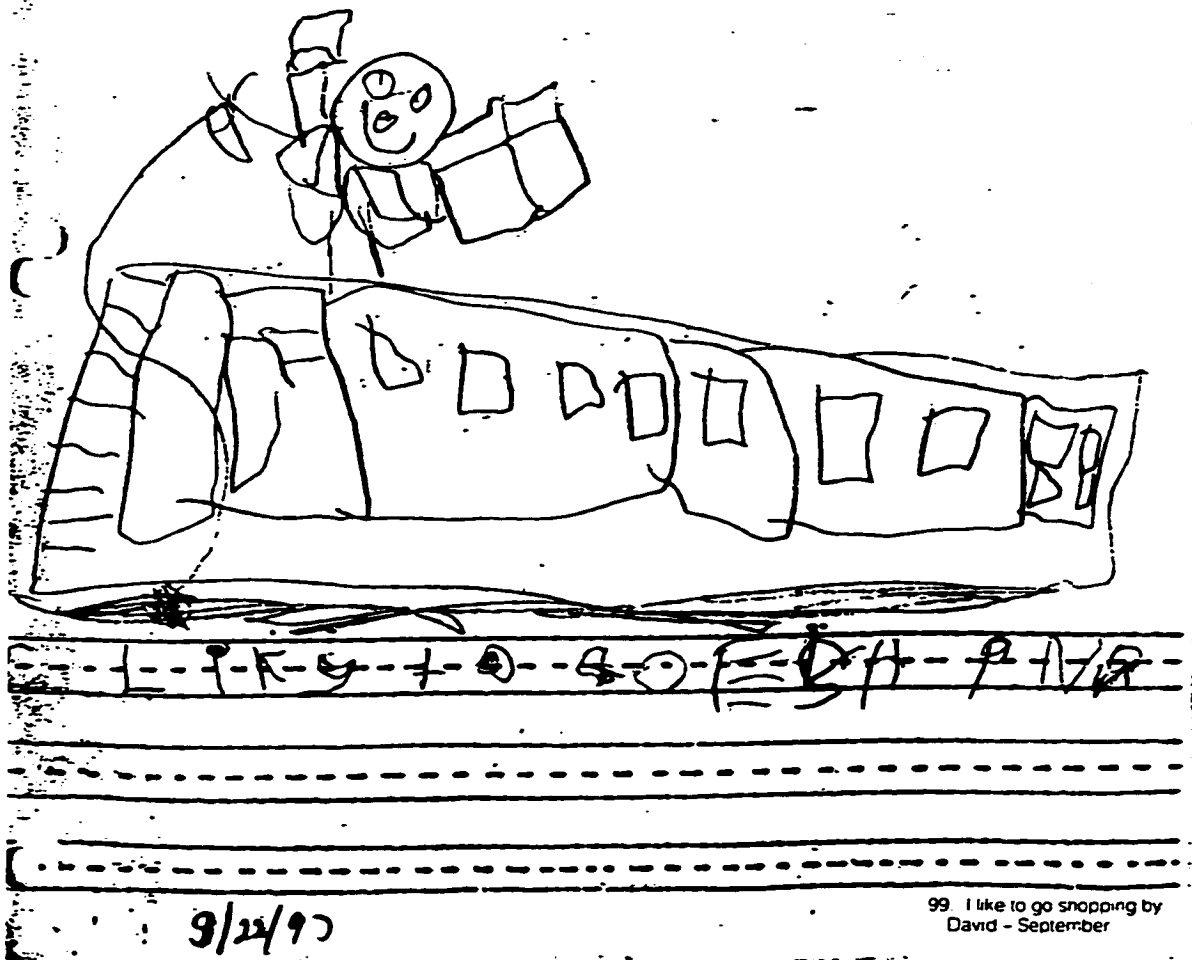
if really bugs me when my Fessie Frowns - 50M Bene Ba

me! I eye And

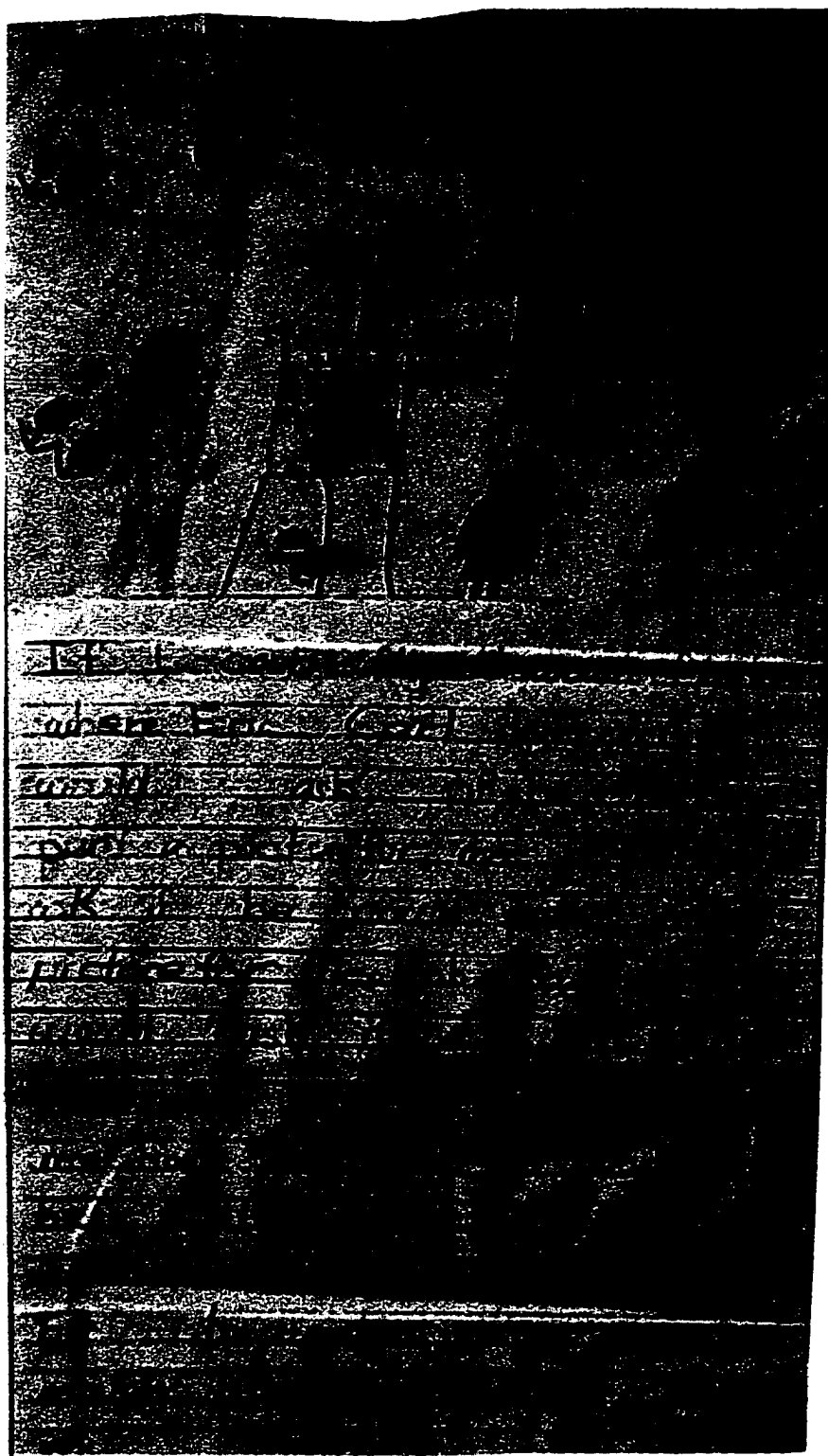
105. It really bugs me by
Kyle - November



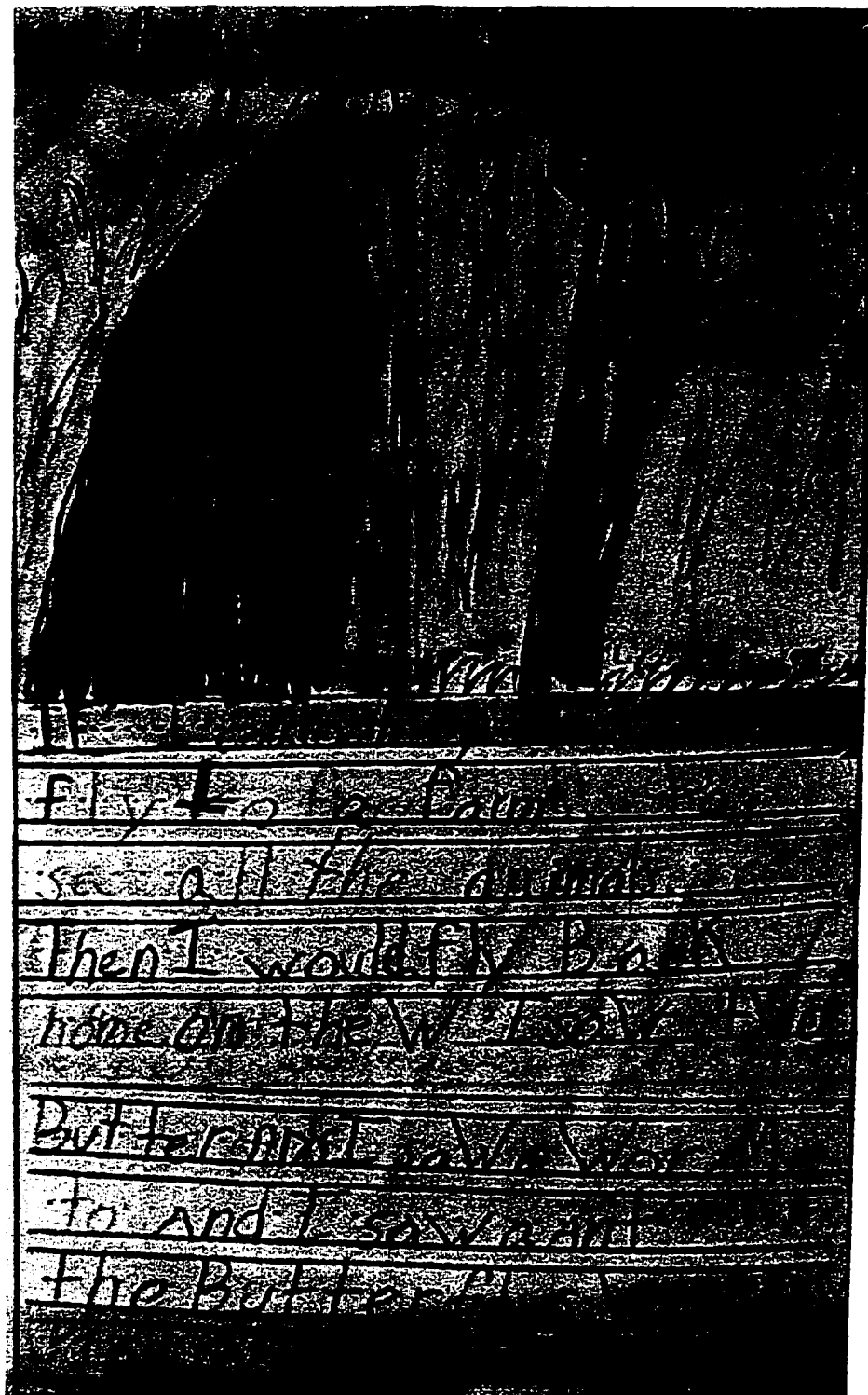
100 My Computer by
Michael - September



APPENDIX D: CHILDREN'S WRITING DRAFTS



91. If I could fly
Katlyn - April



90. If I could fly by
Laura - April

I AM AN ARTIST WHEN

**I JUMP OUT OF A TREE AND PRETEND I AM
PARACHUTING**

**I SKI OR SLED DOWN A HILL IN THE MUSHY ,
COTTONBALL SNOW**

**I GO OVER A JUMP ON MY SLED AND FEEL LIKE I AM
A ROCKET SHOOTING OFF ALL THE WAY TO THE
MOON**

**I GO APPLE PICKING WITH MY DAD AND TASTE RED,
JUICY, DELICIOUS APPLES**

WE PLAY WITH OUR MONKEYS

I WATCH SHOOTING STARS AND THE STARS TWINKLE

**I SEE MARS WITH MY AUNT AND UNCLE WAY UP IN
THE SKY**

I EXPLORE NEW BUGS

I RIDE MY GREEN BIKE IN THE WOODS

**I SWIM IN THE WATER AND PRETEND I AM A FISH SO I
CAN EAT THEM**

15. I am an artist when
brainstorming by all
children - September

I am a Picknicker
blanket waiting to get out
of the closet from the
winter. And I am waiting
for my food on my
blanket. I was waiting. And
waiting to get on that
fuzzy. And some glasses?

131. I am a picnic
blanket - Amy -
November

I am the wind blowing
the trees with red poulaney
flowers growing in the brown
mooshey ground in the spring a

out of the soft mooshey
brown ground and it looks
for the sun and the water.

129. I am the wind by
Brian - April

BY

I am a moth ^{fluttering} ^{through} fluddering thoroo th
soft ^{gentle} gantley wind ^{while} w the
Apple trees are waving in the
^{beautiful} Buttafle Blue SKy.

121. Moth Fluttering
- Brian - October -

in my
Bible
and every book

Books are quiet. A hair Brush
Paper is quiet. Sheets are
quiet when they blow
in the air. eyes are quiet be-
cas that they smile.

Munching is quiet becas its in
you're mouth.

125. Quiet is by
Mariah - February

I am a flower just Budding
I grow taller and taller
evry Day I need rain and
sun to grow I don't
Know what I look like
yet I'm grown up Now
my petals are blue and
pink the light wind is
blowing on me the
Bright warm sun is shining
on me to I got
picked by a ,gigantic
monster By Lin-se

130. I am a flower by Laura
April

the sun is shining Bright
the flowers are pink
Blue red green yellow and
white it's raining on the
flowers the green grass
is just budding there
are fish in the pond
there is a rainbow in
the sky the wind
is blowing soft.

By

120 Sunshining - 4314
May

Dandy lins Bluering in the Green grass 10
 Peple IN Shors OUT side Playng 10
 Aril Flowers Bring May Flowers OUTSIDE in the
 Peple OUTSIDE ^{riding bikes} Playng on the Playgroun
 worms wiggling in the soyle 10
 Peple on the nacht Thru 10
 Leaf Budding on the trees 10
 Peple playng Bask Ball 10
 Trees growng in the soyle 10
 Peple coming BACK from the Solthe
 Tempes startng 10
 Trees gave Peple shade 10

122. Dandylions -
 Julie - Spring

U U I N C I V I
I LIVE IN A HOLE! AND I
EAT CHEESE! AND I CANT
SWIM! AND A OWL CAN EAT
ME! A BAT CAN CHASE ME!
I AM FAT! I HAVE A FAT
TUMPLE! I RUN FAST! I TUMP
ON TREES! I EAT GRASS ON
MY FEET! I CANT GO
FAR PEOPLE! IF YOU PICK
UP I WILL BITE YOU! I
TUMP ON YOU! I
KNOW SOME ROCKS
WHAT AM I?

133.

Owl by Kyle - May

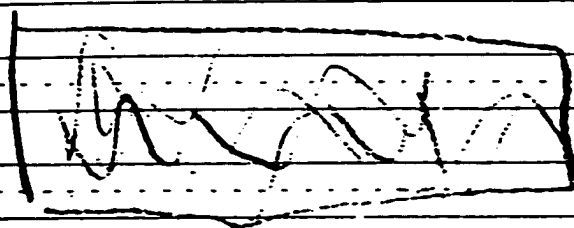
My bug has lots of legs.
It has four eyes. When he
hears rock n roll music, he starts
to dance. He lives on a fence.
He is very colorful! He likes
to eat leaves. He also likes
to eat smaller bugs. He
has no wings. He likes to
eat. He is very friendly.
He is very fat. He is
soft. He is soft. He is
soft. He is very funny.

134. My bug has lots
of legs by Mariah -
May

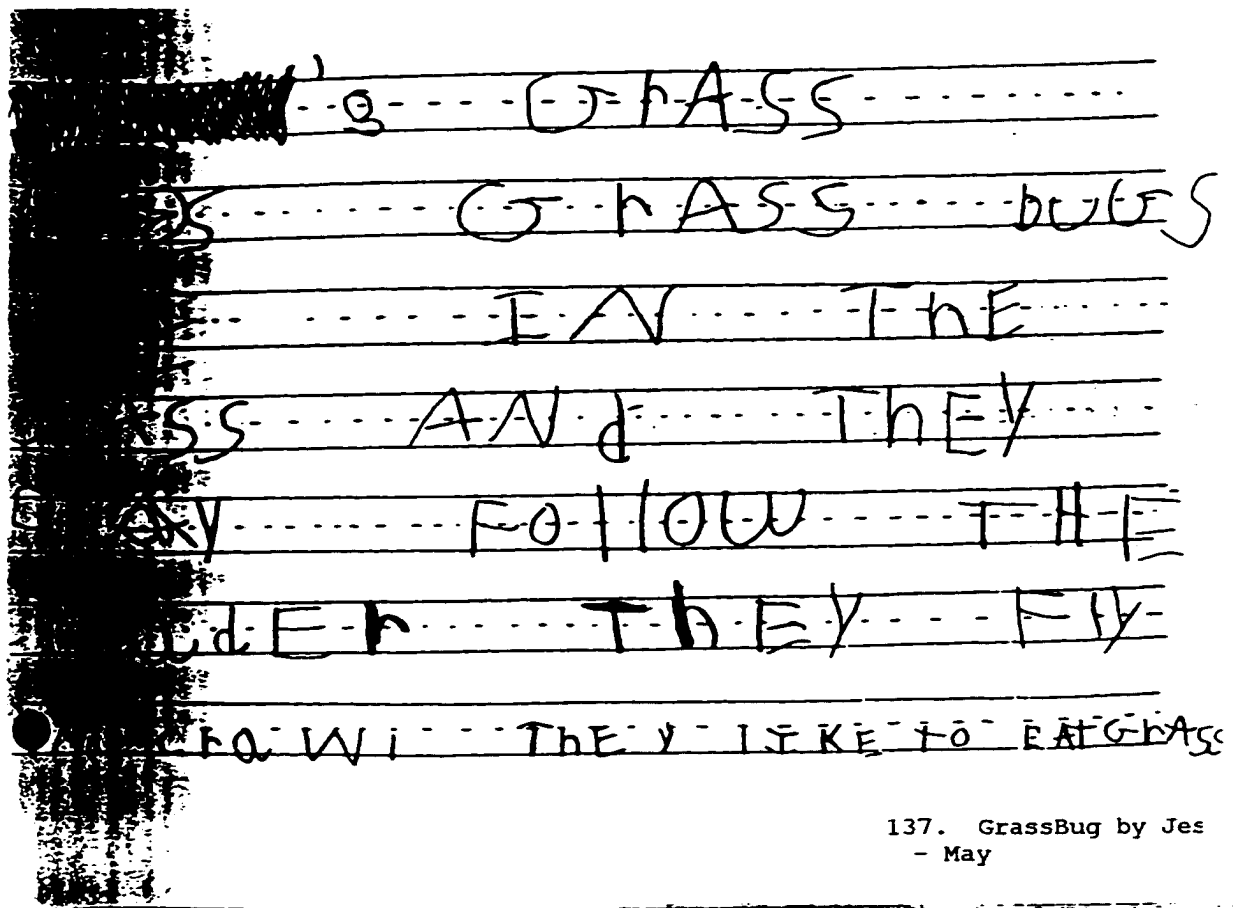
What if people were bugs?
They would have three Body
parts and they would have
antennas and they would
have six legs and may be even
wings and we would look
funny. there would be no
pollution and there would
be no more cars. If I was an
insect, I would want to be a
butterfly.

135. What if people
were bugs by Laura
May

Ete-ka-met I live in the
 Grass with my friends
 and Wierdow, I'm a fussy
 bug I have 6 legs I can fly,
 I call the members when me and
 my friend wr playing in a pool
 and he pool me in,

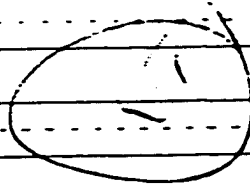


136. I live in the
 grass by Stevan- May

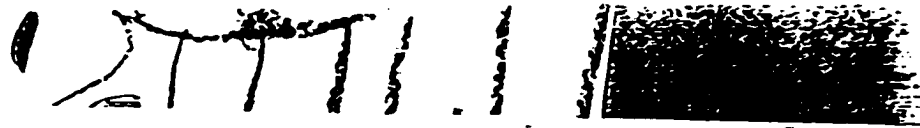


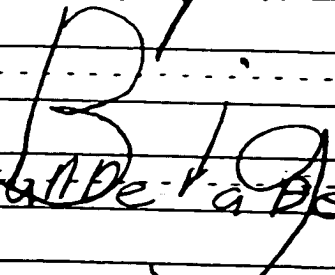
137. GrassBug by Jes
- May

I can fly. I
have joyntd lags
I some times I
fly in your haas.
my wings go zominge
relefarte. I have intancs
I am vare smol.
I am blak.
Bzzz I am ciand fat.
What an I
Bye . . .



141. I can fly by
Katlyn - May

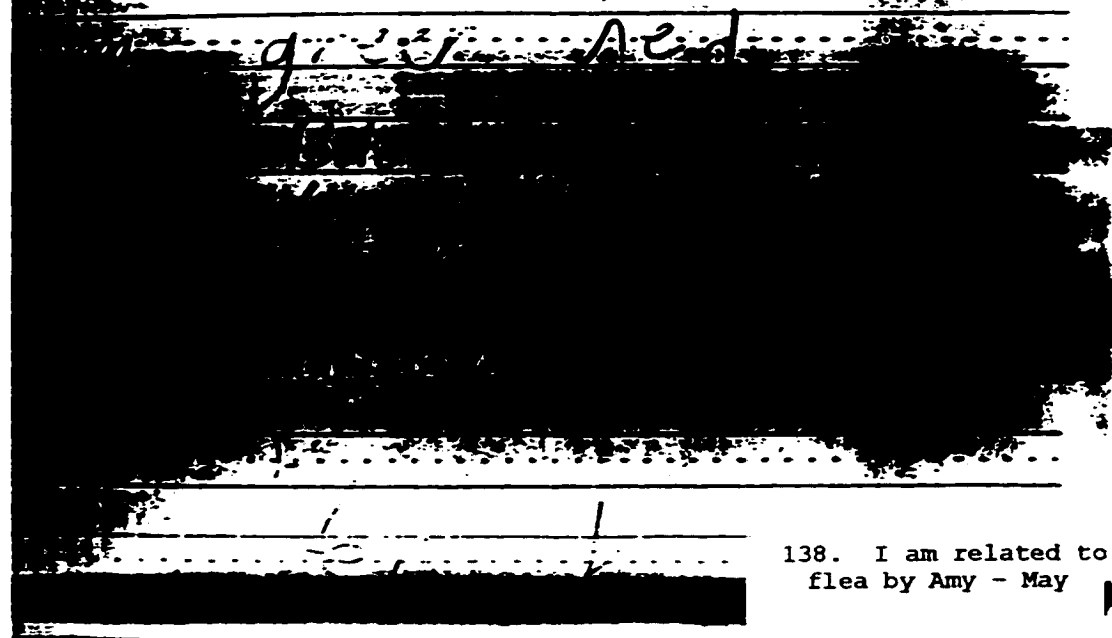


My Freckled Bug
My Freckled Bug lives in California
and he has a lot of friends. His
friends are named Shortie & Freck
and Nose. And they like to eat
smelly worms!!!! They have a long
antenna. He is 
lives in a hole under a rock.
When you ever go to bed check
it!!!!

140. Freckled Bug by
Kerri - May

mi something that is related
a flea and I have
hundreds and millions of
I have wanted to get
all Bugs you do
I want to get
bit from me.

g. v. Aed.



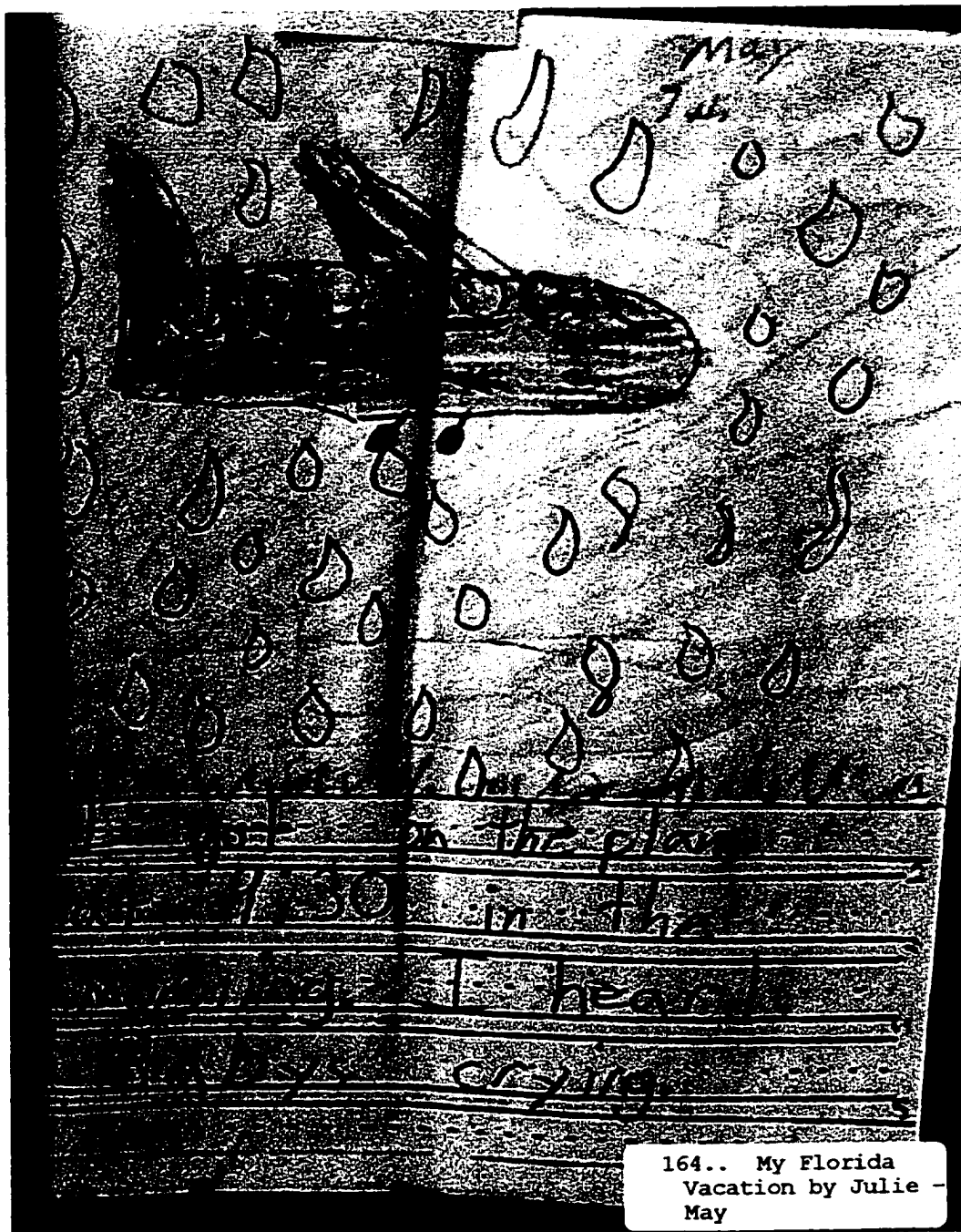
138. I am related to
flea by Amy - May

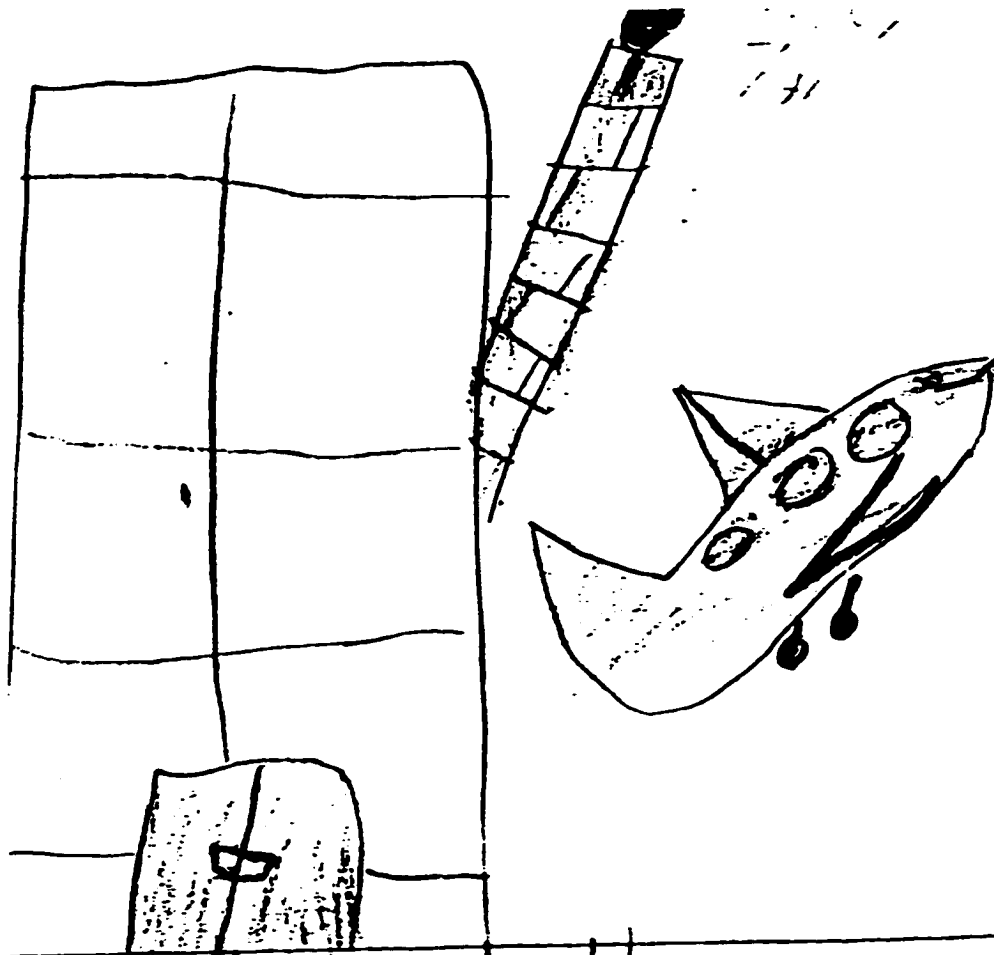
I am a Spider Ant
Bug. I have a
lot of friends.
I have rainbow
legs. I have Six
Eyes and I have
won intano
logr Ther The
othar won
my hairs

139. I am a spider
ant by David - May

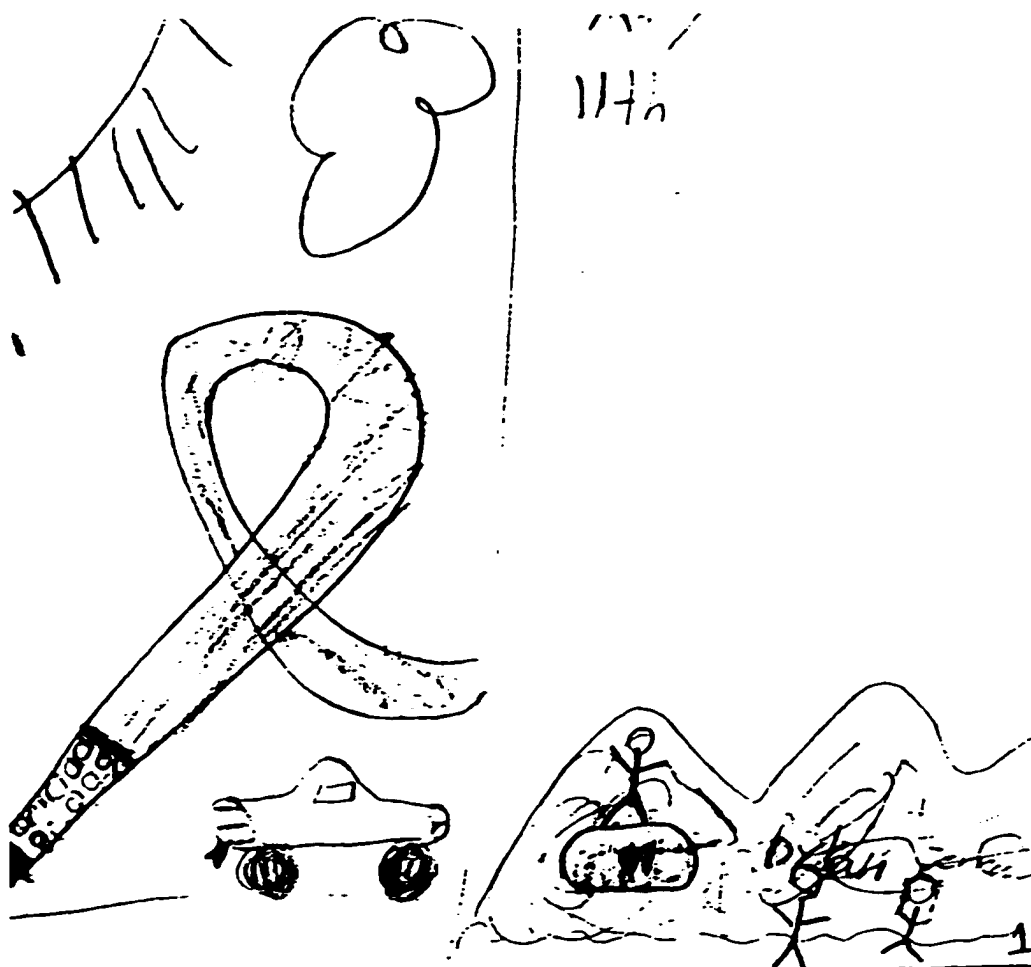
APPENDIX E: CHILDREN'S PERSONAL ILLUSTRATED STORIES

-





1
e saw tall
2
buildings when I
3
was in the air
4
on the
5
me.



then we were in
 arida we went to
 csh... Garderis and
 refort Reich. On
 day and on Saturday

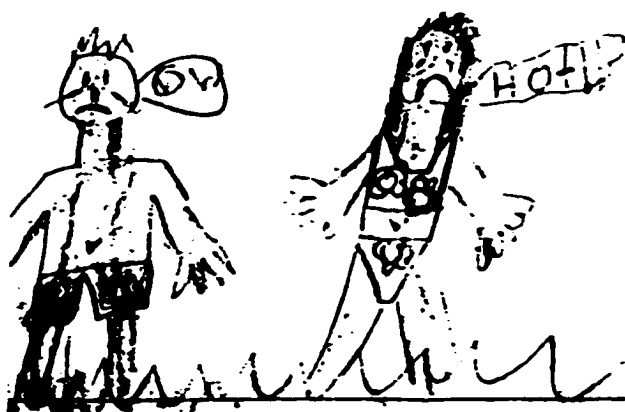


at a hotel we stayed

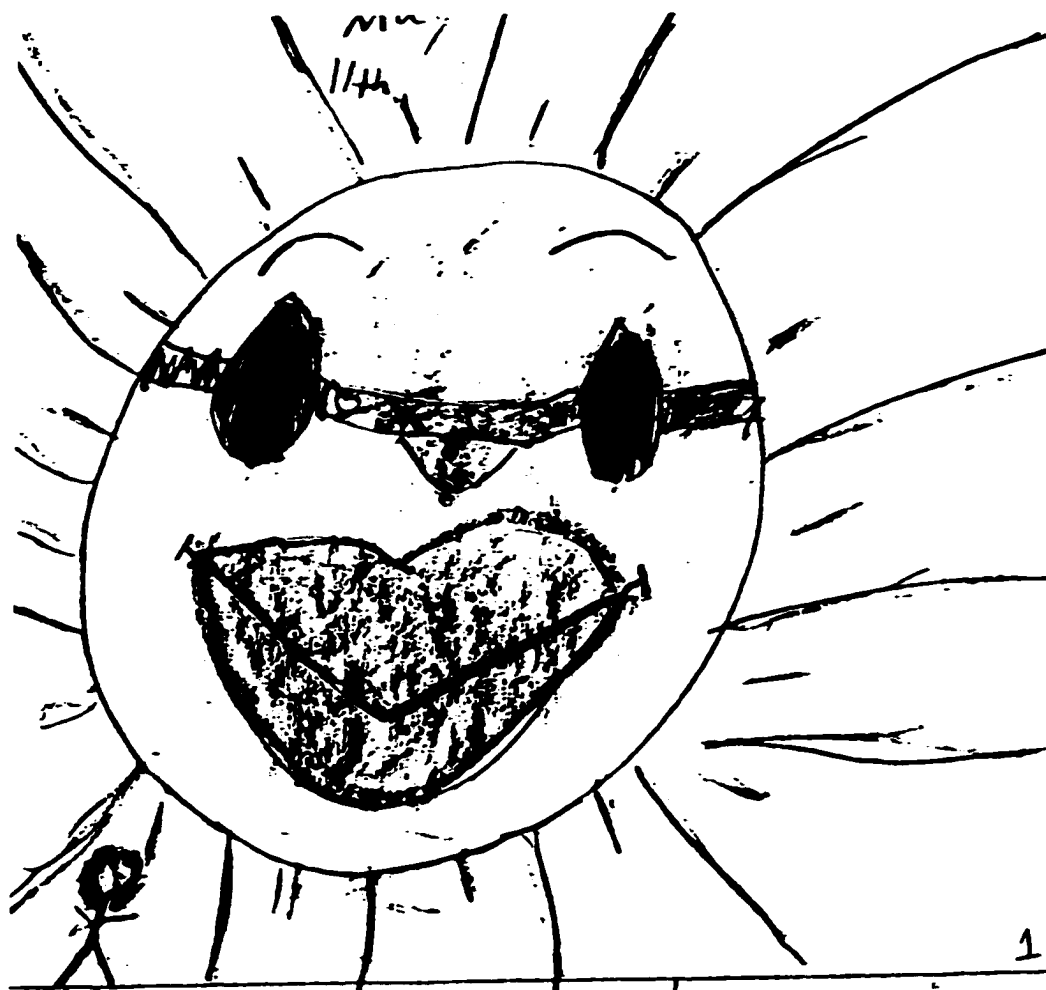
Holiday Inn and

in La Playa

may
11th



then we were in
Florida me and my
other got a bit
arn on our selves



1
 ✓hen we where in
 2
 2rida the sun came
 3
 4
 5
 was so hot.

Craz-z-zy Vacation!

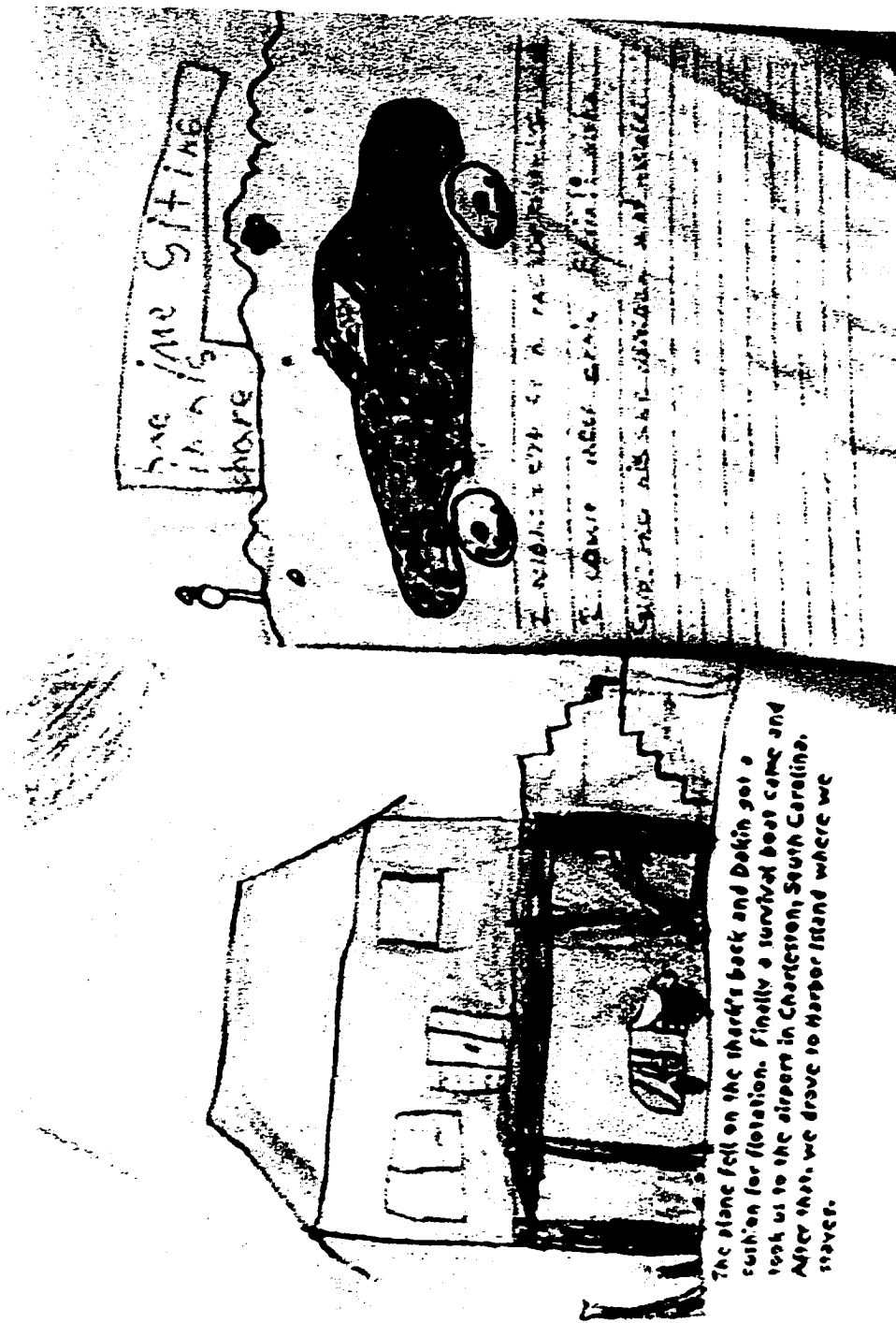
by



109. Craz-z-y Vacation ©
Michael - May



It was a Saturday, February 20th, 1999 and I took my second plane ride. When we flew over the bay, we lost control of our right wing!!!! We crashed into the bay! The water was the fridigest ever. Dakin went under the water for about 5 seconds. A great white shark attacked Dakin!



143. Florida Vacation
By Michael - May

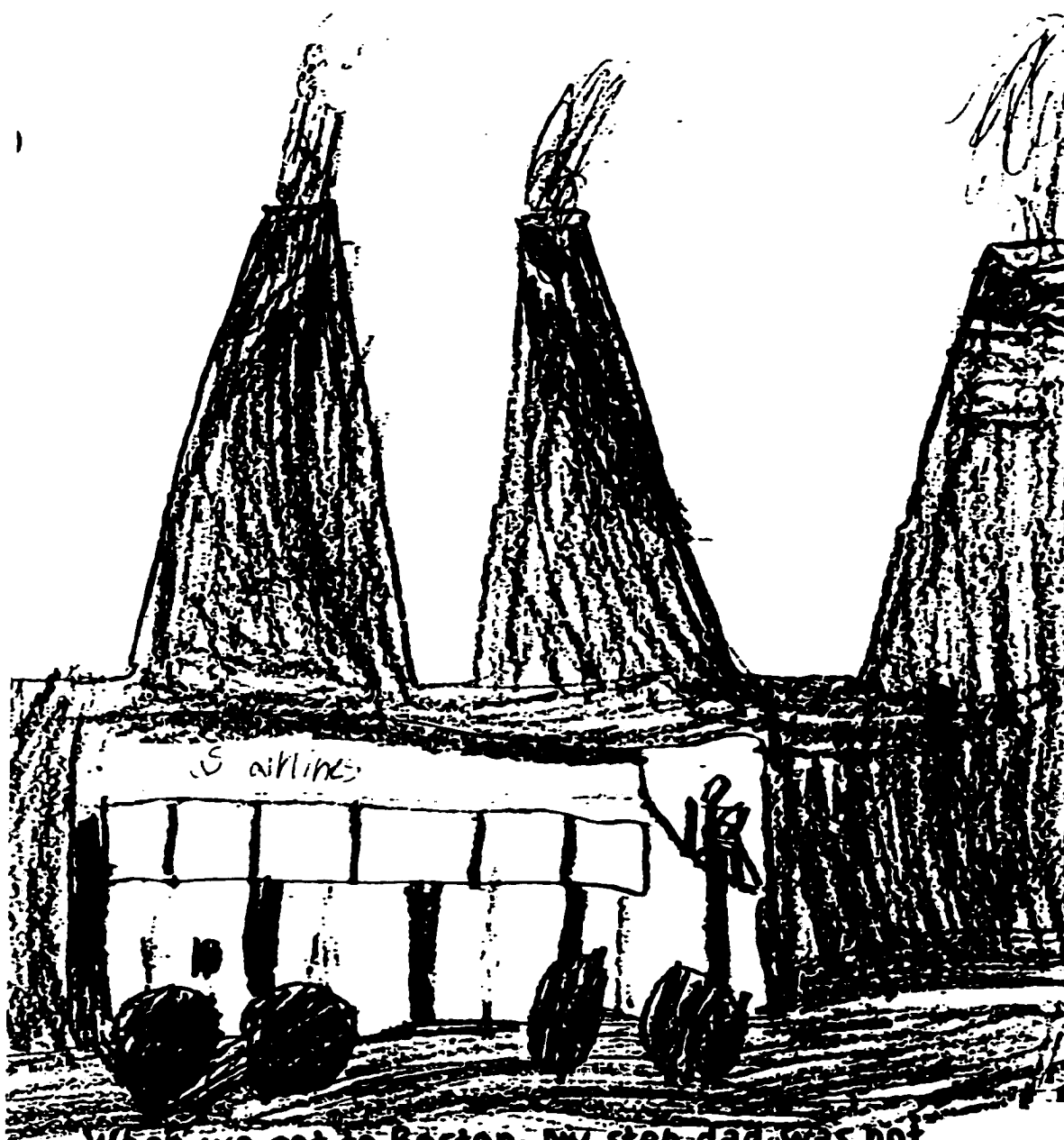
102. Race Car by Kyle -
January



On the first morning, my mom went to Pelican Point Beach. About 3 miles down the beach, my mom saw a dolphin that was washed up on the beach. It was groaning and it reacted to my mom's voice. My mom thought of pushing it back into the ocean. She looked for other people to help but she saw no one. Just then the high tide came up and saved the dolphin.



The rest of the week went by fast except for the day we went back. In the Charleston airport, the flight was delayed for five hours. Then at Washington D.C., there was a blizzard and six inches of snow, so it had to be two days late.



When we got to Boston, my step dad was not there! He arrived one hour later because of a flat tire. We had to take a bus home. That was exactly what happened. The End!

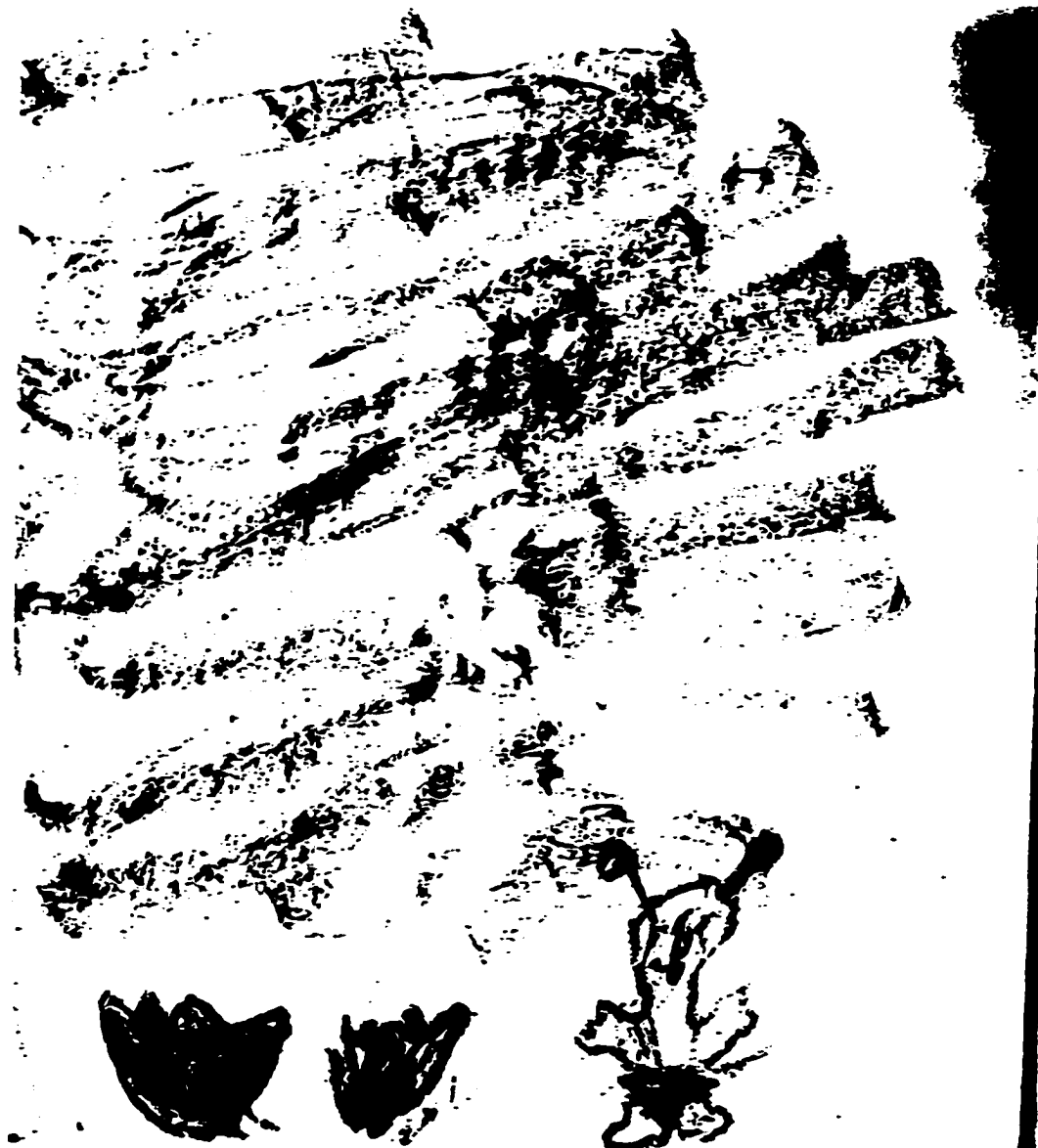


The Really Cool Alien
written and illustrated
by

110 The Really Cool Alien
by Kern - November



“Hello! My name is Ally the alien. My real name is Allison the alien and I’ll tell you all about my life.”



**Well, I hatched from an egg and
when I was a baby, I had a yellow
tail.**



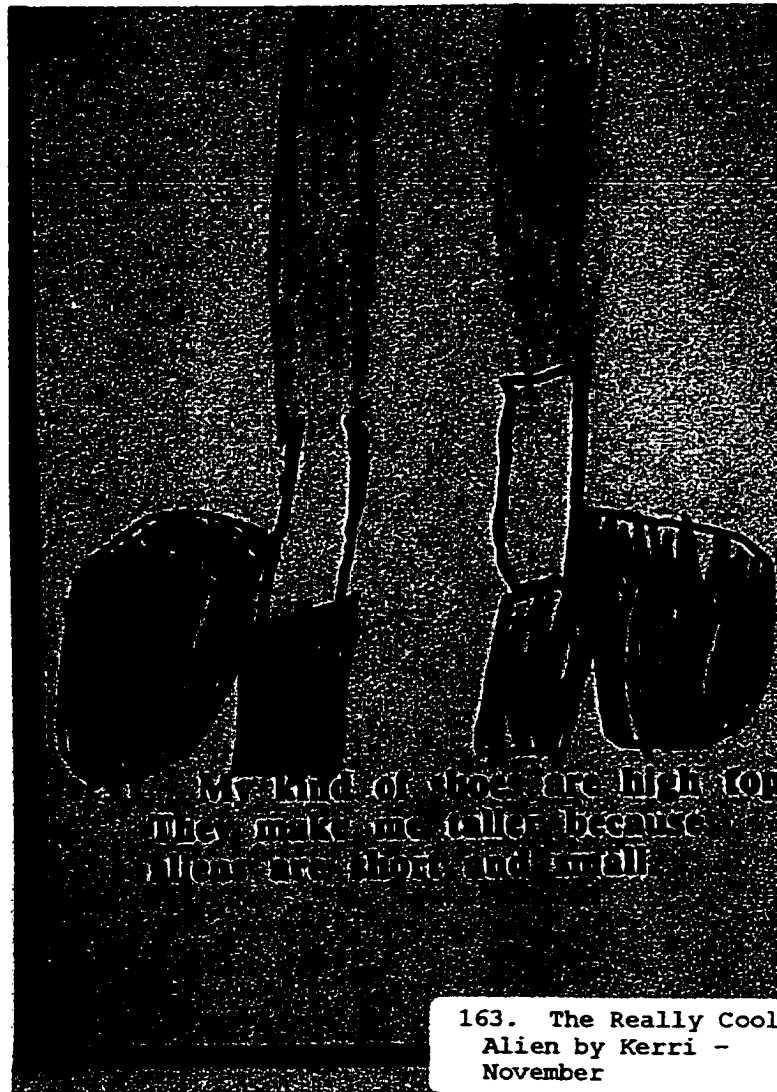
**I have a friend named Inter
planet Janet. She's a galaxy girl.
She came from a place in the Inter
world.**



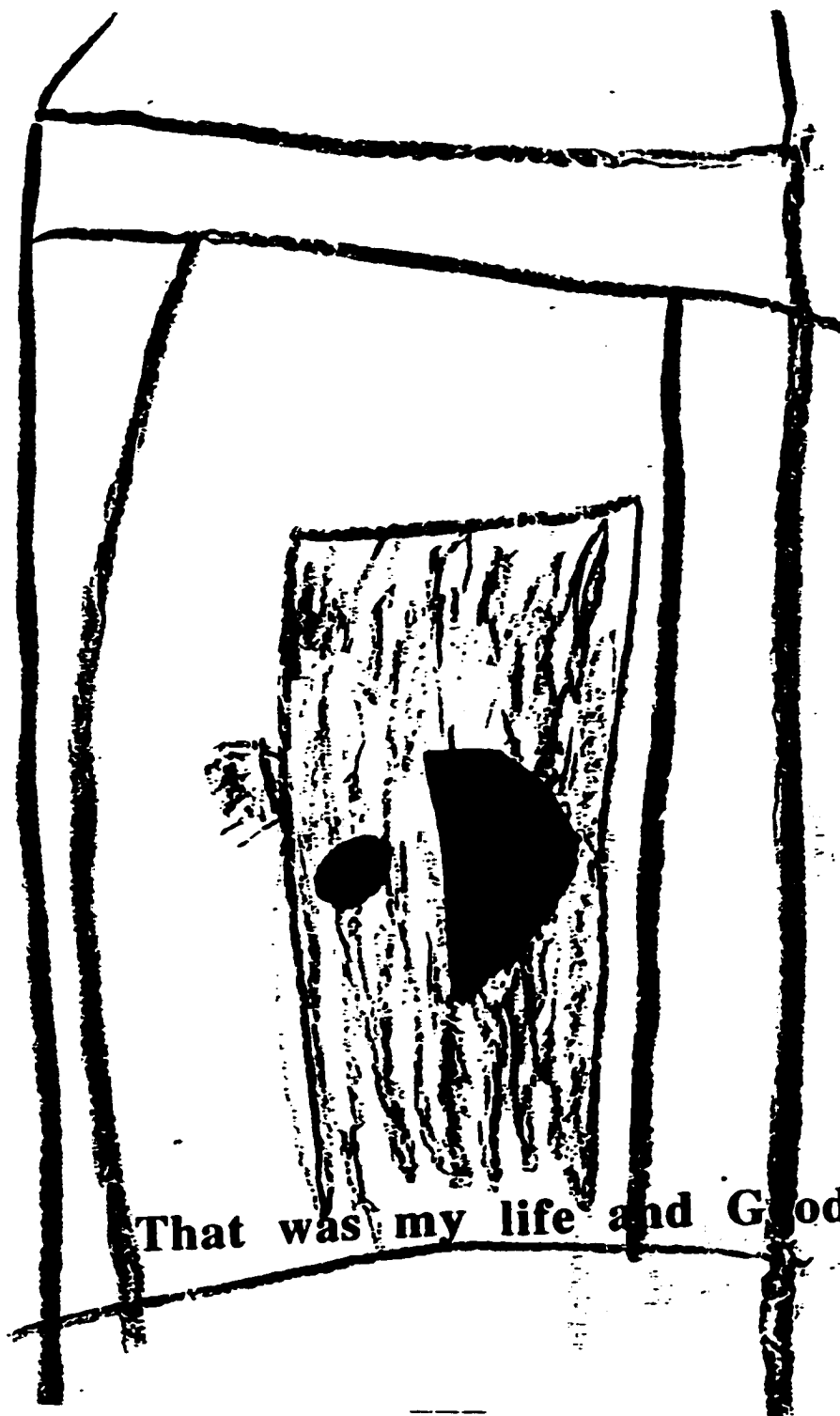
I have four sisters. Their
names are Kelli, Megan, Lucile,
and Jennah.



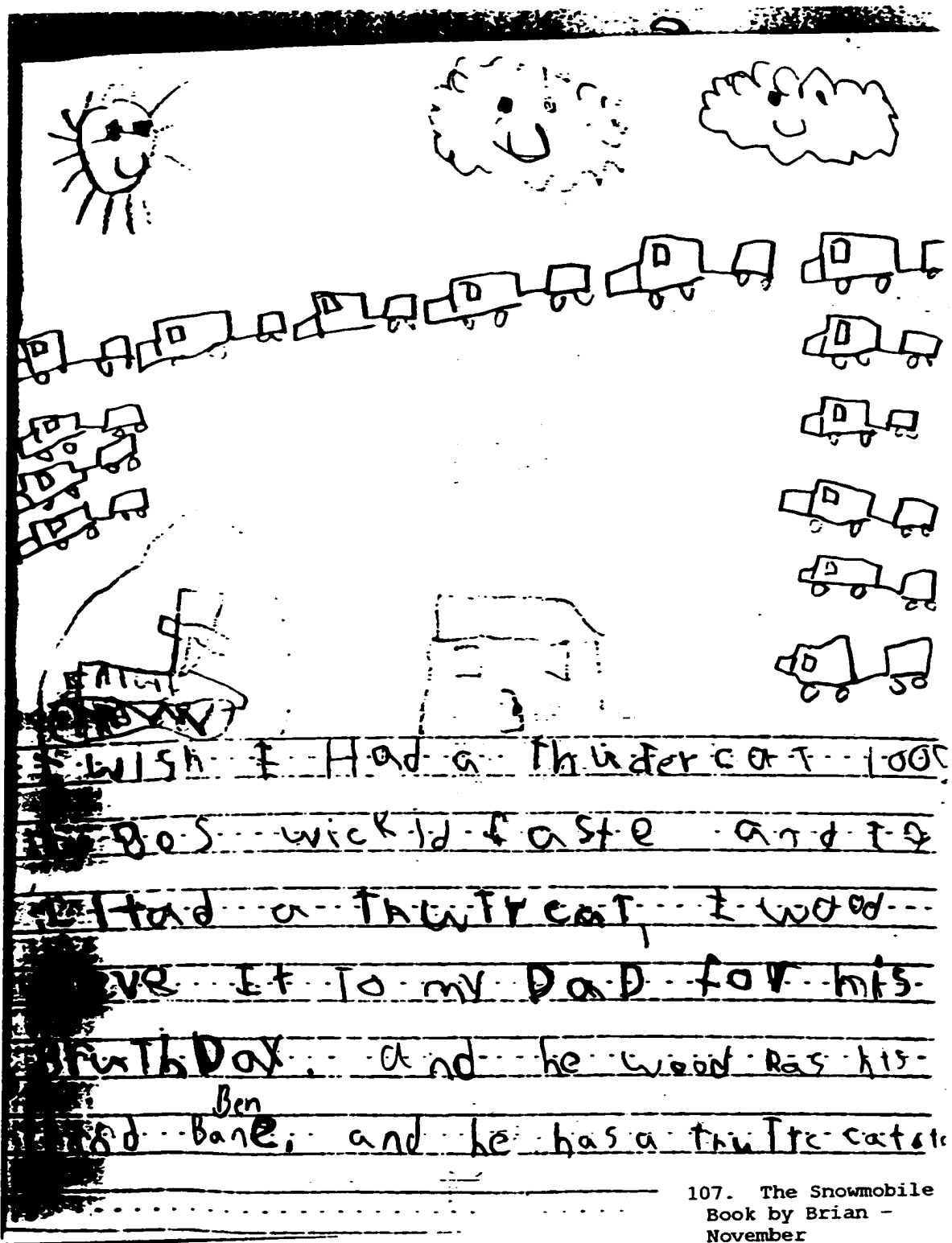
**I have people clothes so
humans will think we are hum:
too.**



163. The Really Cool
Alien by Kerri -
November



That was my life and Good-bye.





I know a lot of Bate Snowing Bines.....

The Pistines are on the The Spink Futa.

~~be-cess~~ The Pistines have 41 to be-cess

~~the Spink Futa~~, ~~be-cess~~ ~~the Pistines~~ ~~have~~ ~~the~~

~~be-cess~~ ~~the Spink Futa~~ ~~be-cess~~ ~~the~~

Pistines are what make it Spink and

the 9.5. K. A. R.



I wish that I Had Ziller
 Dolls. I was BY last to snowmobile
 and I was R my D. At Art
 It feels like Riding a roller coaster
 You go so fast your face is white
 Cold in case you want a hot mito.

107. The Snowmobile Book
 by Brian - November

APPENDIX F: CHILDREN'S ART

.



88. I am a snowflake
by Laura - November



83. Mariah in her
cage by Katlyn -
February



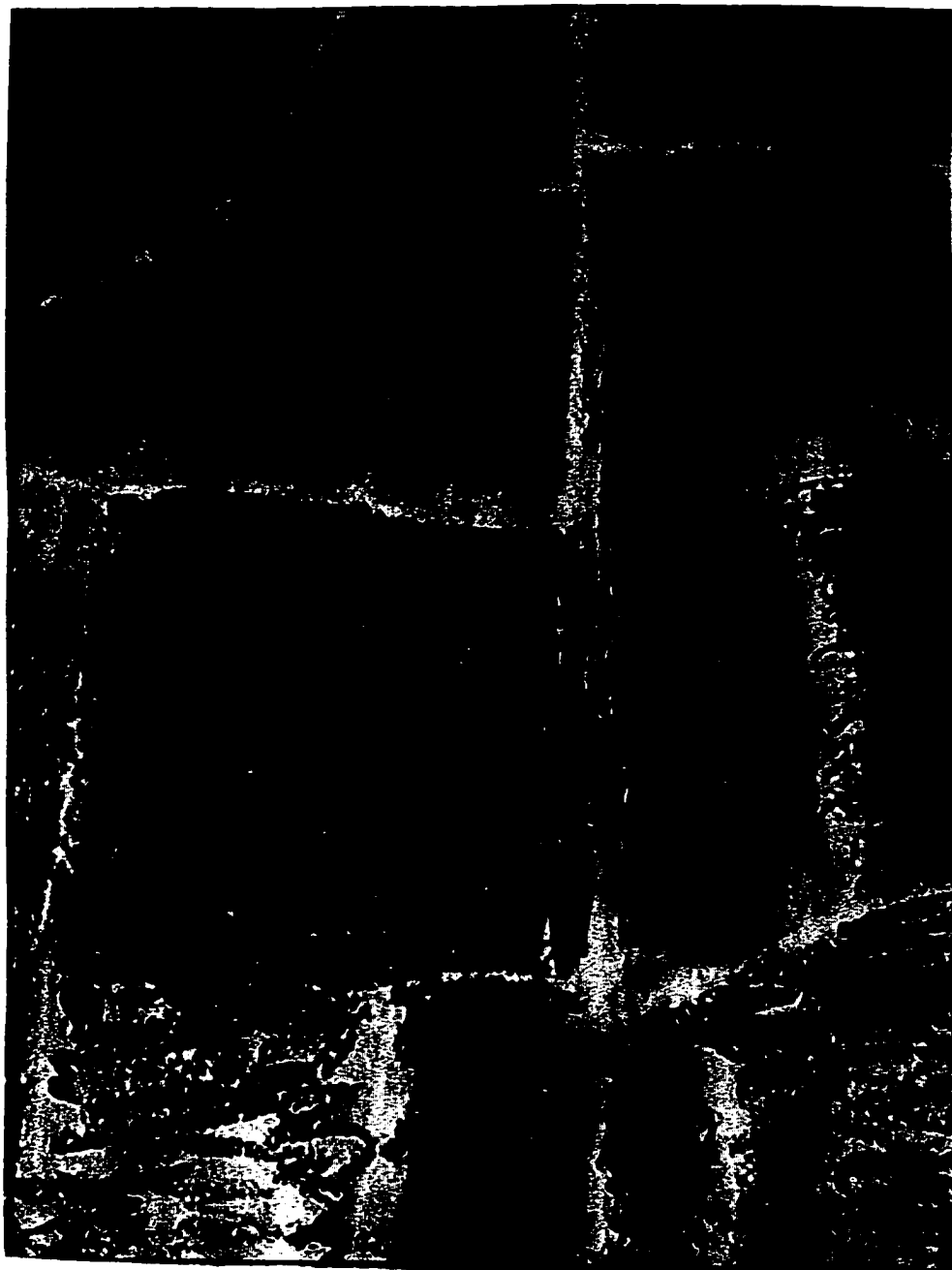
82. My Parakeet by
Brian - February



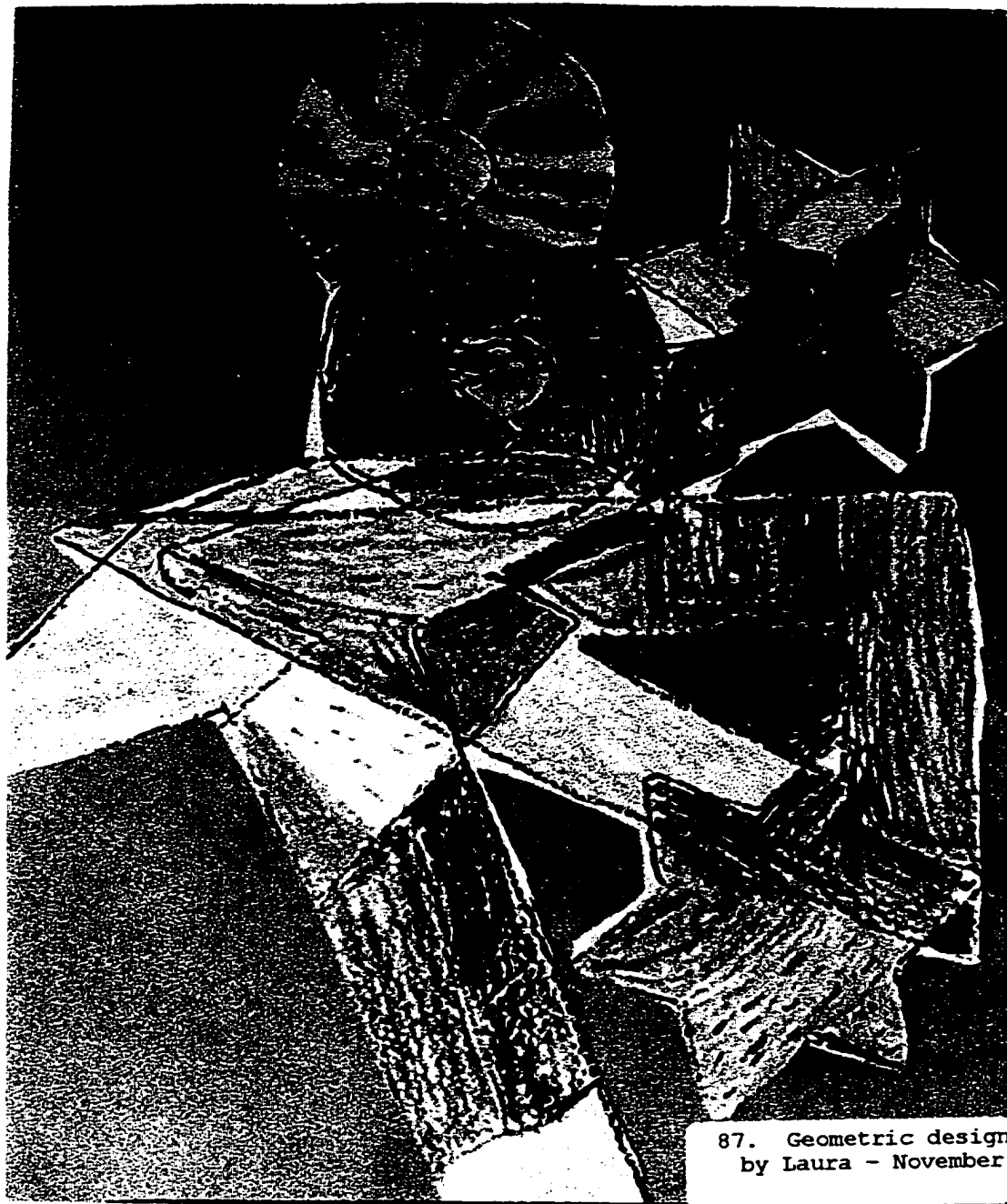
158. Craypas Puzzle k
Jesse - Ocober



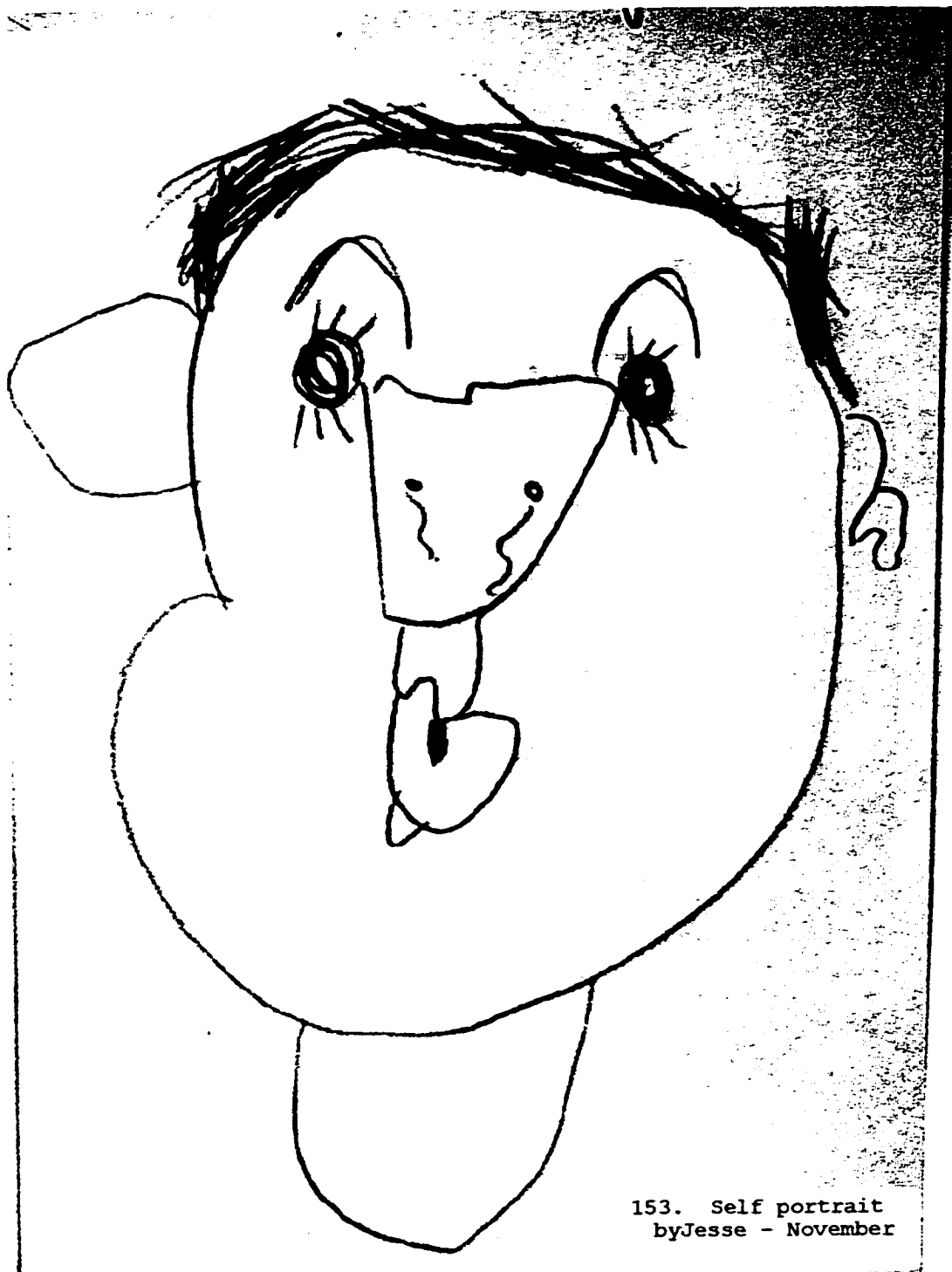
159. Craypas Texture
by Maggy - october



160. Craypas Quilt
Katlyn - October



87. Geometric design
by Laura - November



153. Self portrait
by Jesse - November

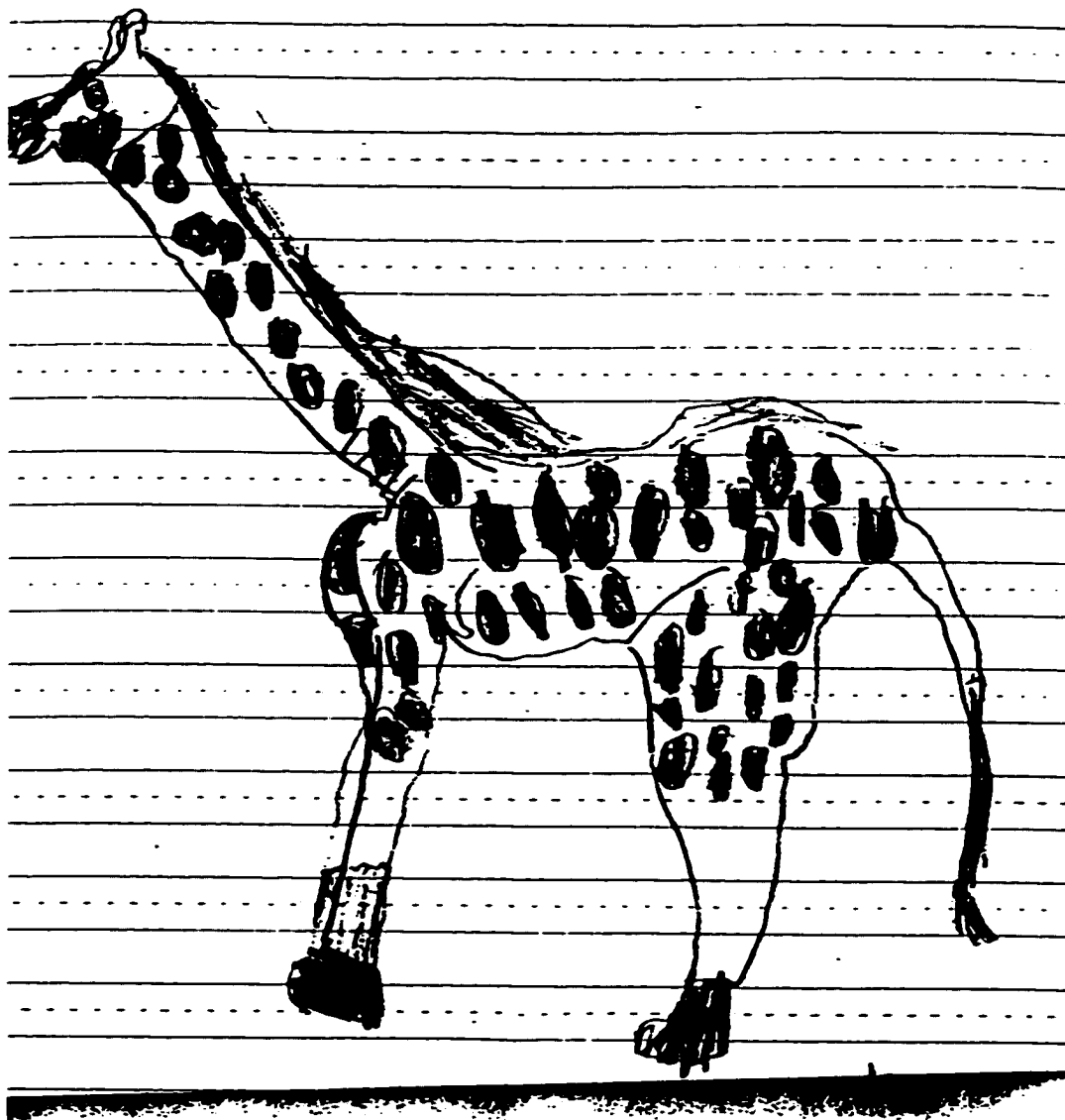


152. Self Portrait of
Michael -
November





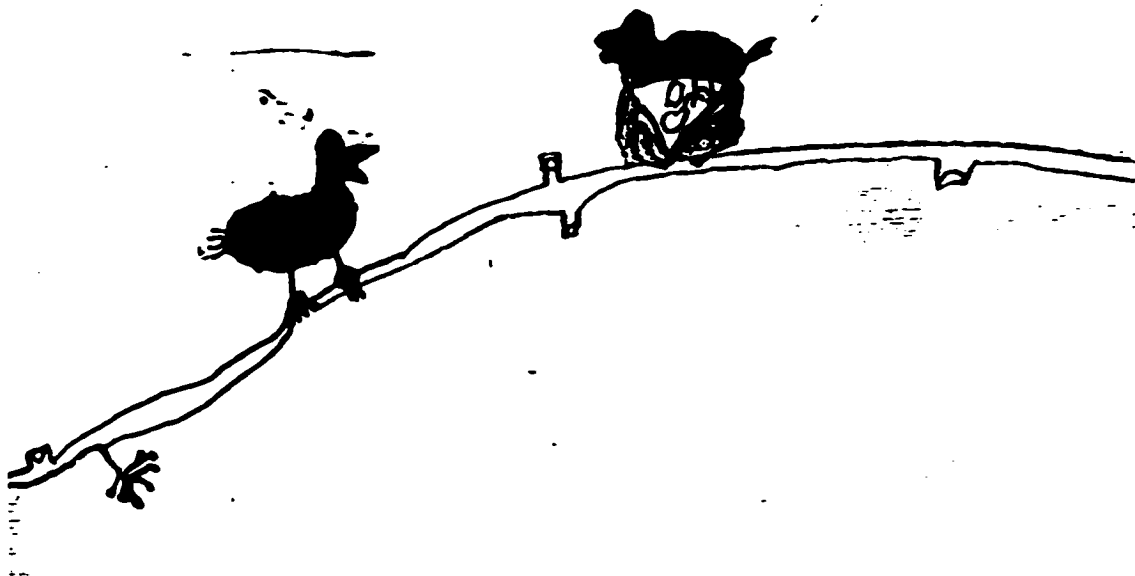
84. The Chick by
Julie - April



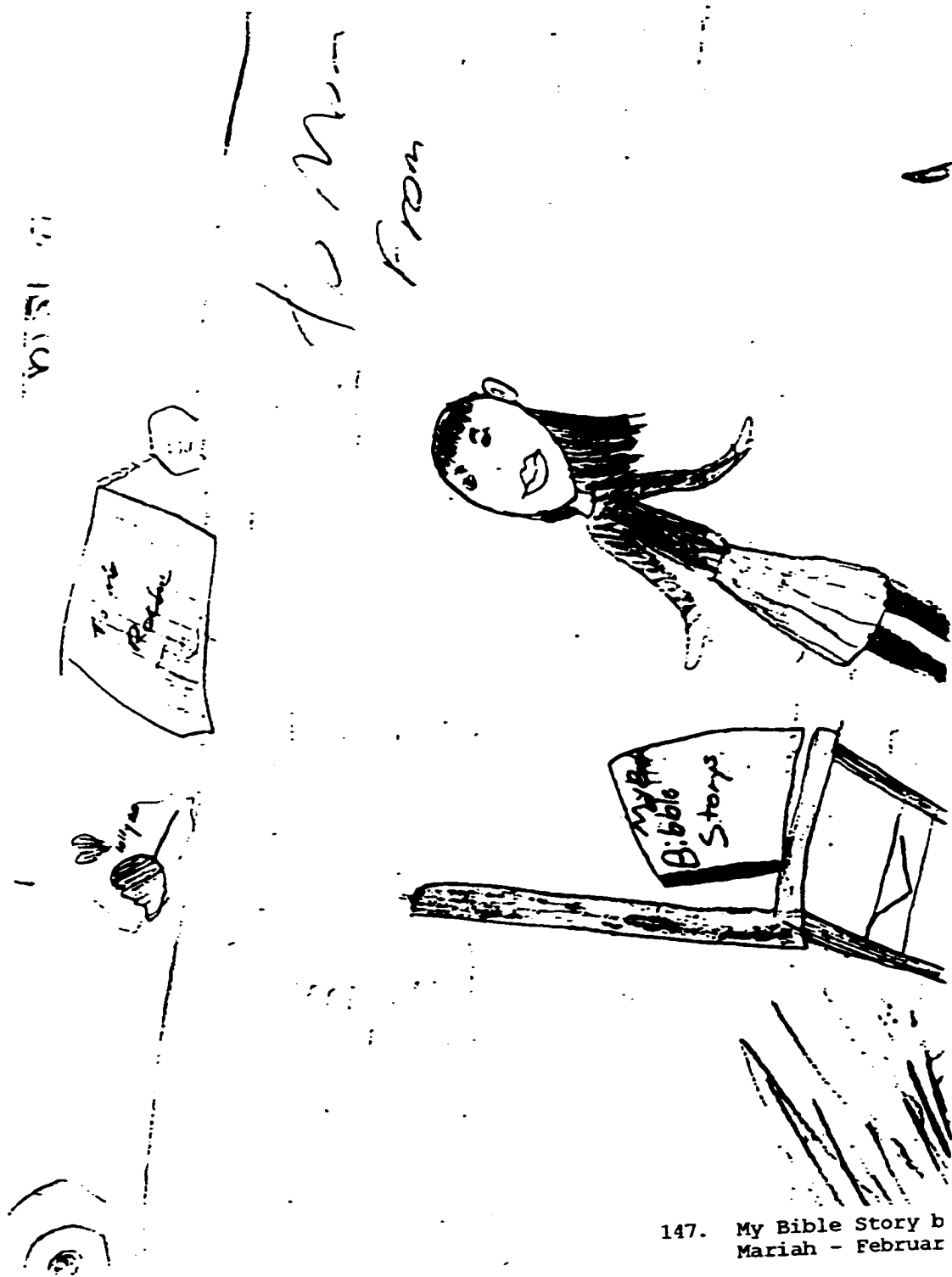
106. Giraffe by Kyle -
February



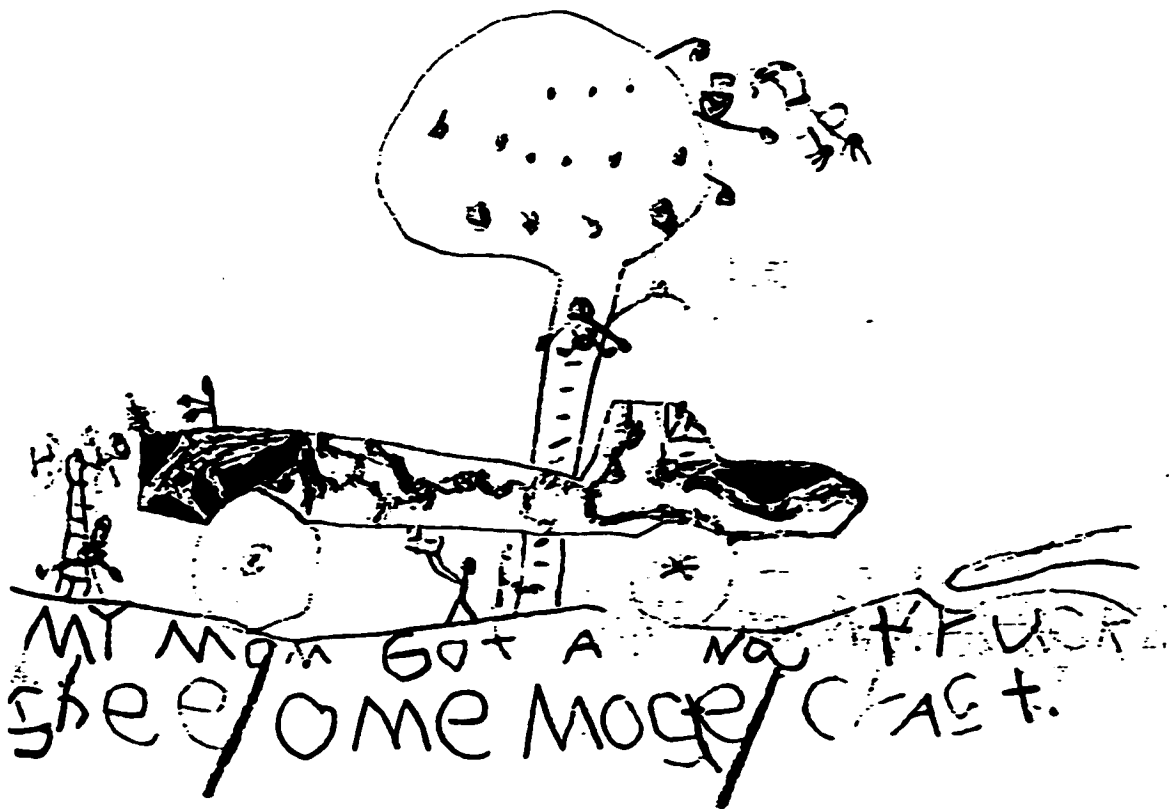
145. Sketchbook
drawing by Julie -
November



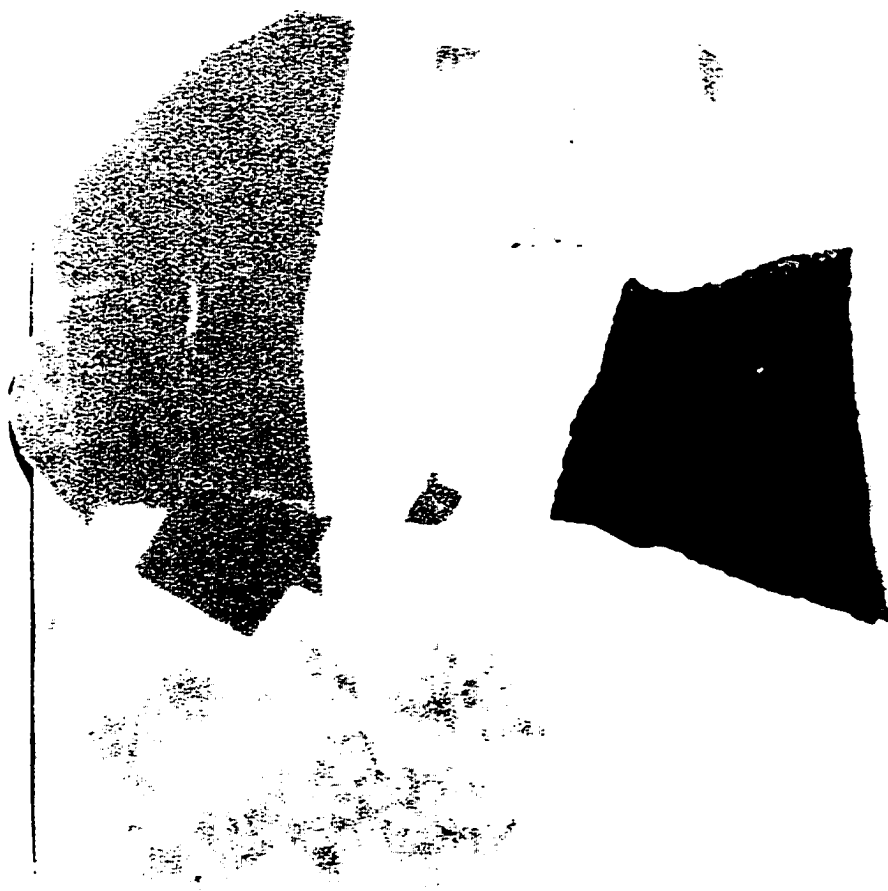
104 Bird's nest by Nye
April



147. My Bible Story b
Mariah - Februar



44. My Mom got a new
truck by Kyle -
November



156. Tree with a cave
by Laura - October

Rain is a unicorn,
galloping in the air.
It lands on a tree,
and makes the leaves get wet.

by



Rain sprinkles,
rain splashes,
rain zooms!
Rain is like a roller coaster,
when it twirls through the sky.

by



59. Rain by Kyle and
Laura - April



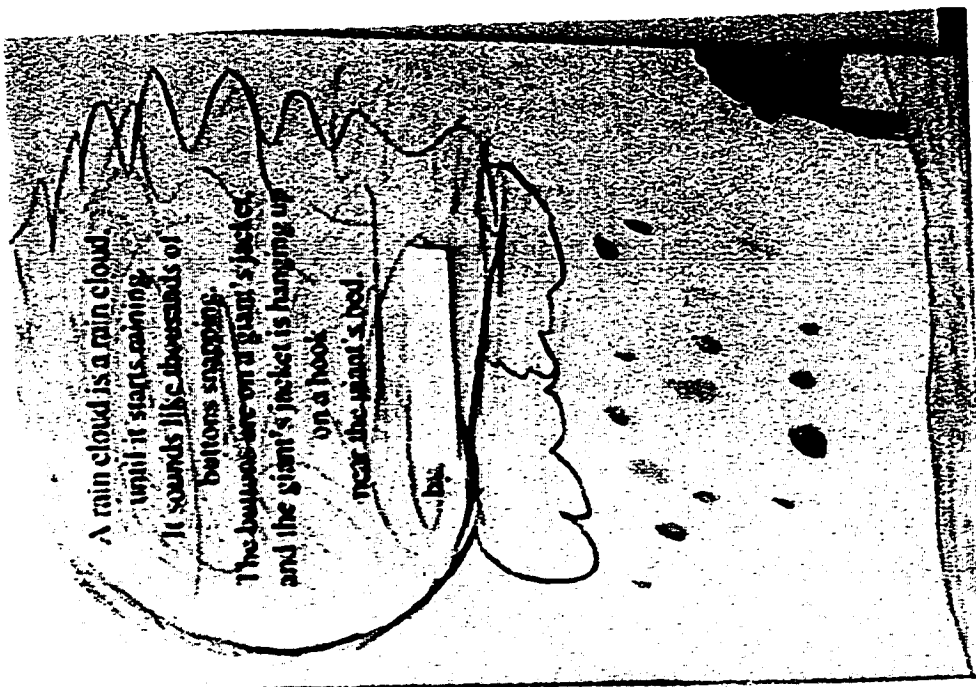
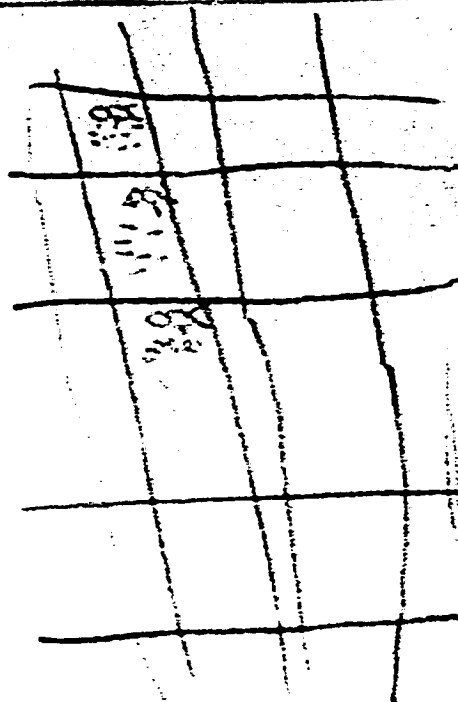
If rain was Mom,
she would be kissing me
on the water lakes.



61. Rain by Maggy -
April

Rain dribbles on your skin.
 Rain gallops down.
 Rain tumbles.
 Rain splutters on the ground.
 Rain clatters on your roof.
 Rain feels mushy.
 Rain feels soggy.

by



A rain cloud is a rain cloud.
 until it starts raining.
 It sounds like thousands of
 buttons snapping.
 The buttons are on a giant's jacket
 and the giant's jacket is hanging up
 on a hook
 near the giant's bed.

94. Rain by Jeff and
 Kerri - April

APPENDIX G: IRB APPROVAL

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

Office of Sponsored Research
Service Building
51 College Road
Durham, New Hampshire 03824-3585
(603) 862-3564 Fax

December 1, 1997

Cynthia Vascak
PSC Art Department
Inter-Campus Mail

IRB No.: 1903

Title: Portraits in Compassion

Dear Ms. Vascak

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research has received your response to its recommendations for the above-referenced protocol. You have sufficiently addressed IRB concerns, and approval is hereby granted for one year until December 1, 1998. At that time you will be asked to submit a project report with regard to the involvement of human subjects. If your project is still active, you would then apply to the IRB through this office for an extension.

The protection of human subjects in your study is an ongoing process for which you hold primary responsibility. (Please refer to the enclosed Assurance of Compliance document and Belmont Report.) Any changes in your protocol must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to data collection. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 862-2003.

Please refer to the IRB # above in all future correspondence related to this project. We wish you success with the research.

Sincerely,



Kara L. Eddy
Regulatory Compliance Officer
Office of Sponsored Research
(for the IRB)